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ARROW**
NO.28

and

STRAIGHT ARROW

10c



Fred Meagher



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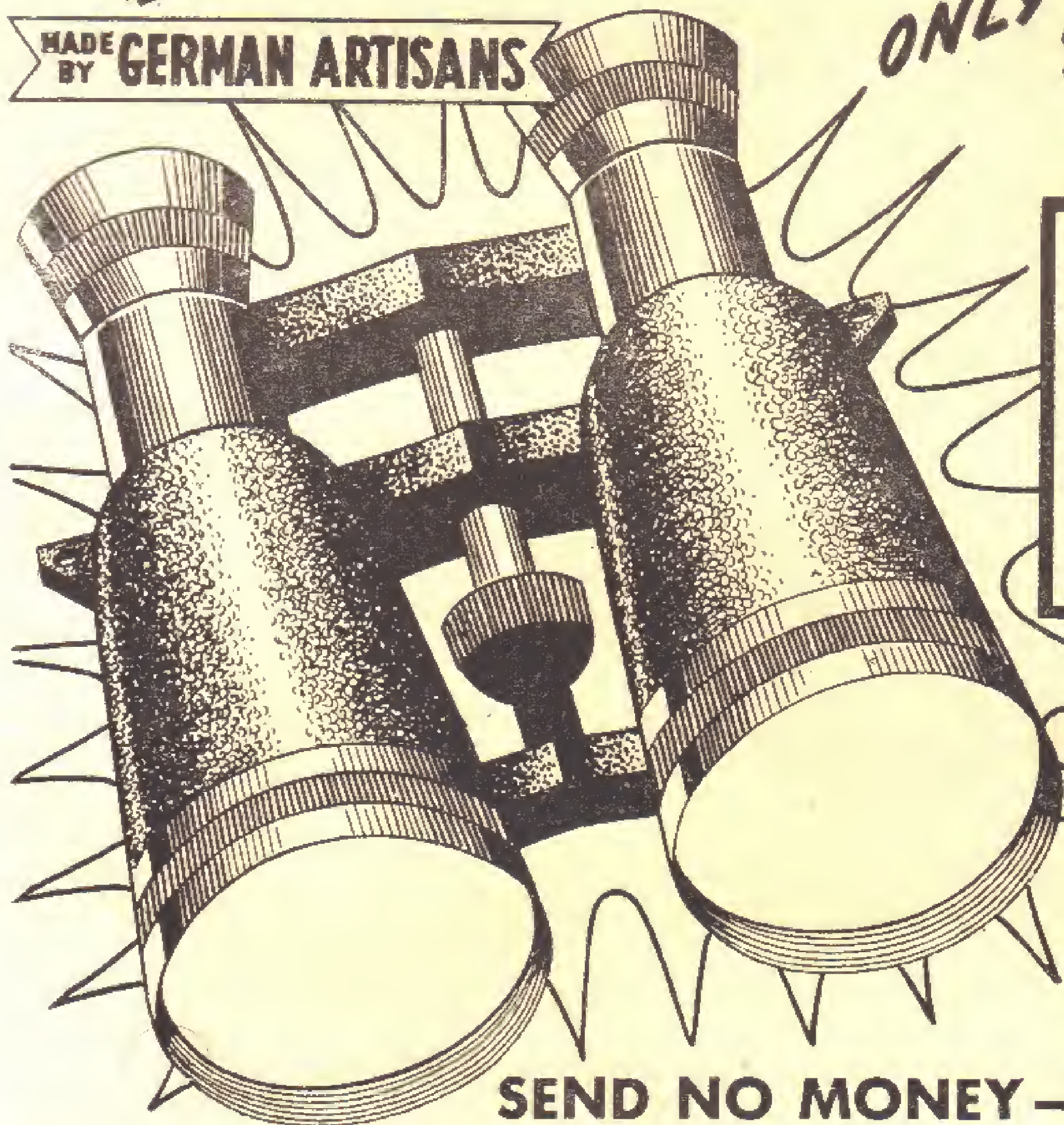
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STRAIGHT-ARROW

FRIEND OR FOE? BRAVE OR KNAVE? HERO OR ZERO? ... THESE ARE QUESTIONS THAT **STRAIGHT-ARROW** MUST TRY TO ANSWER ABOUT A MYSTERIOUS LITTLE MEXICAN WITH A VALIANT TONGUE... AS BATTLE AND TERROR AND MENACE ARRIVE SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH

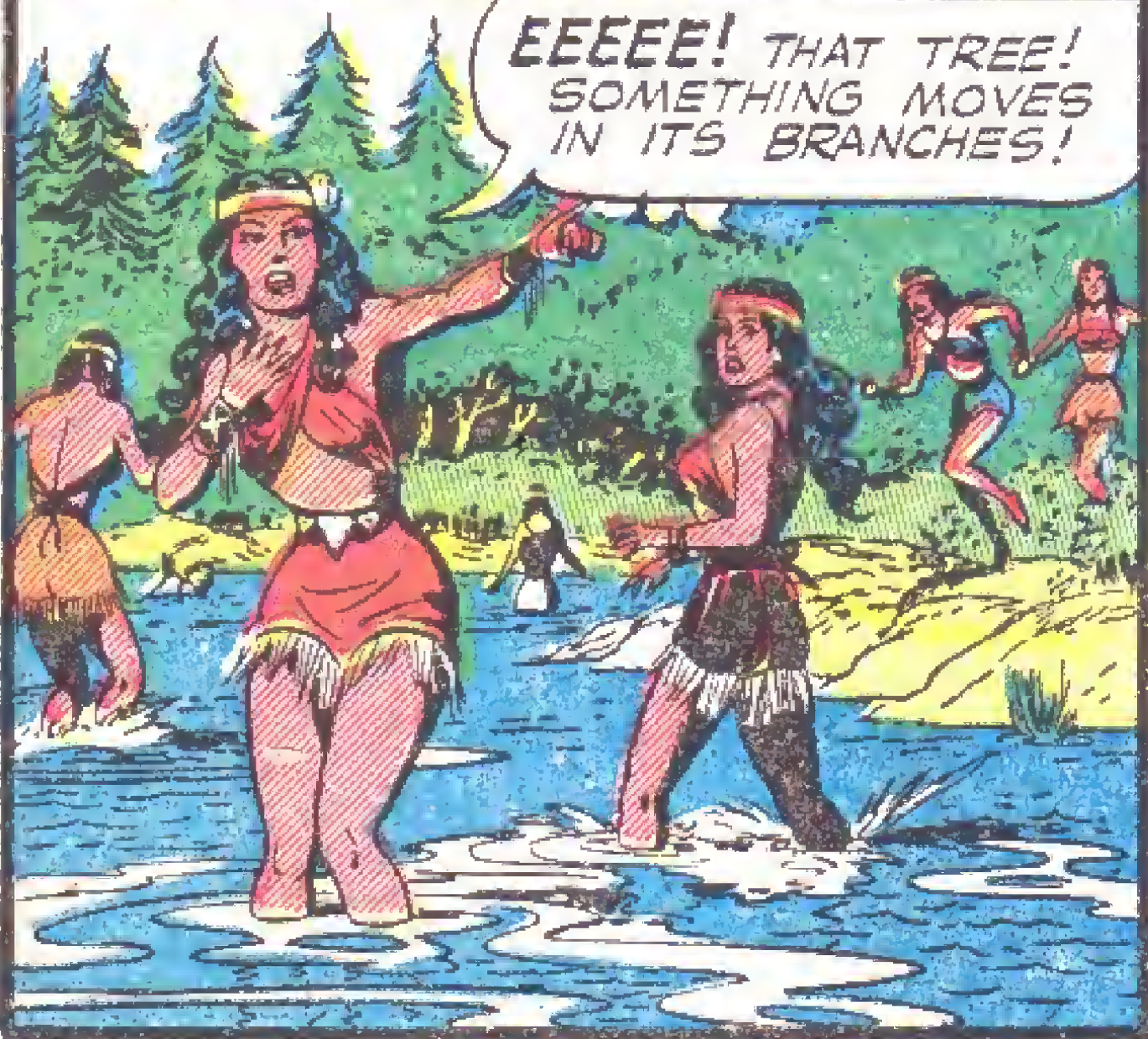
"THE CHALLENGE OF PEDRO BOMBO!"



Art Fred Meagher

EARLY ONE SUNNY AFTERNOON, SOME COMANCHE MAIDENS WERE SWIMMING IN A RIVER NEAR THEIR VILLAGE WHEN—

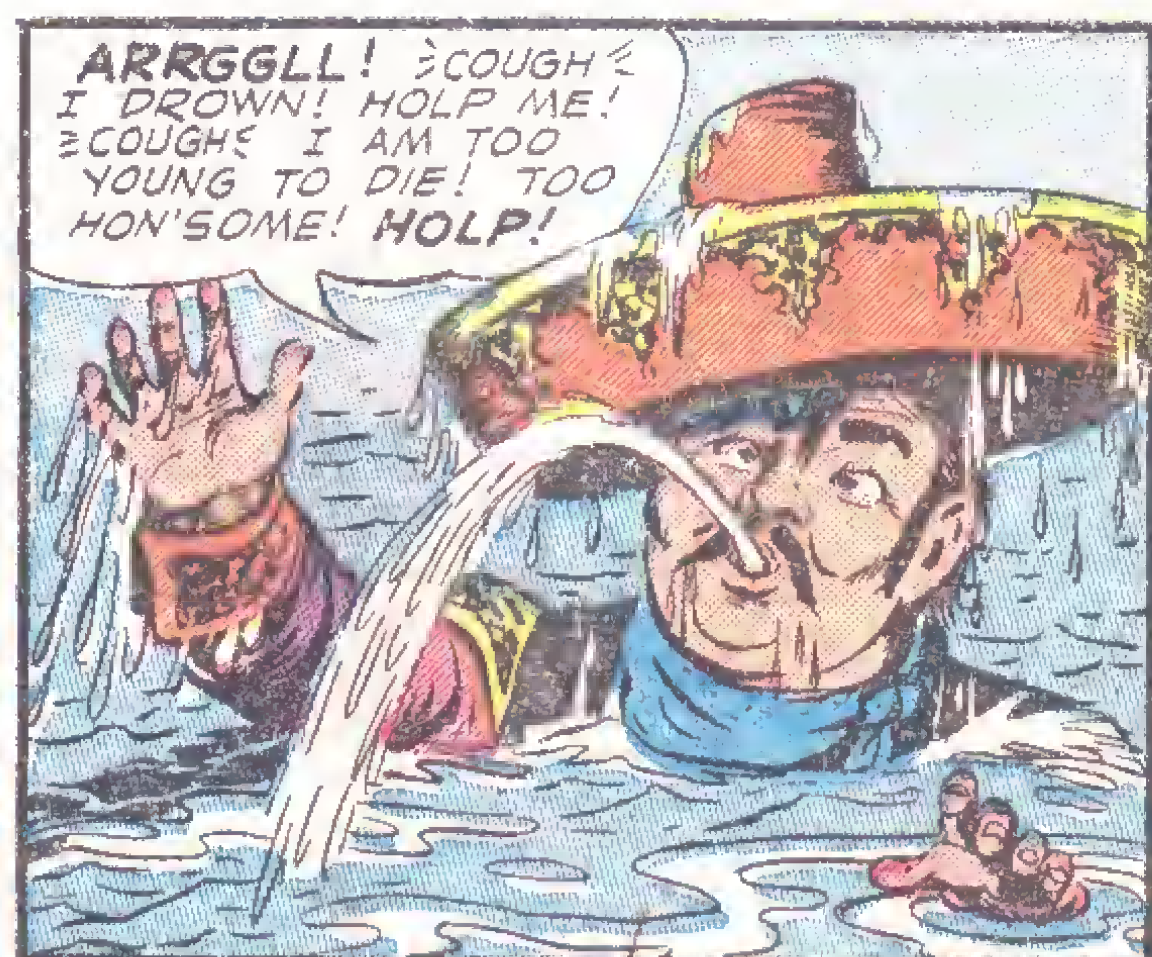
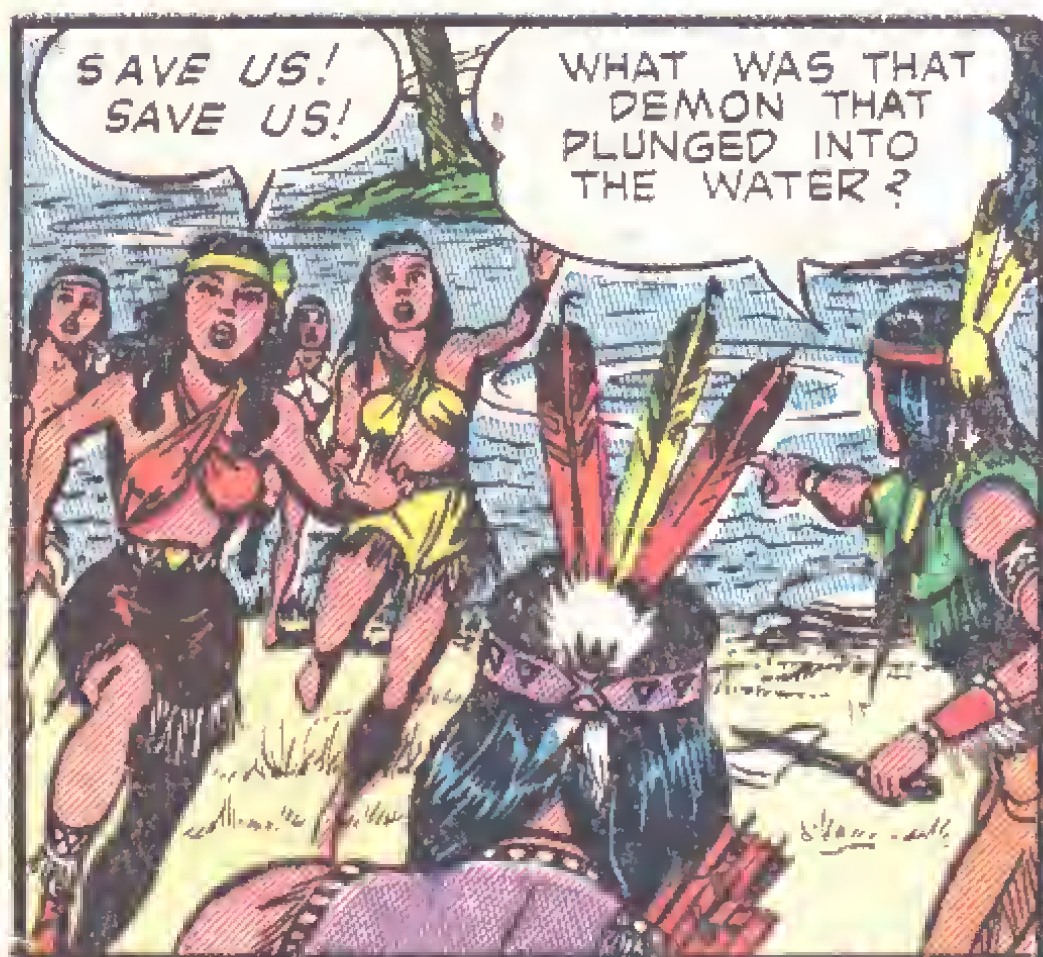
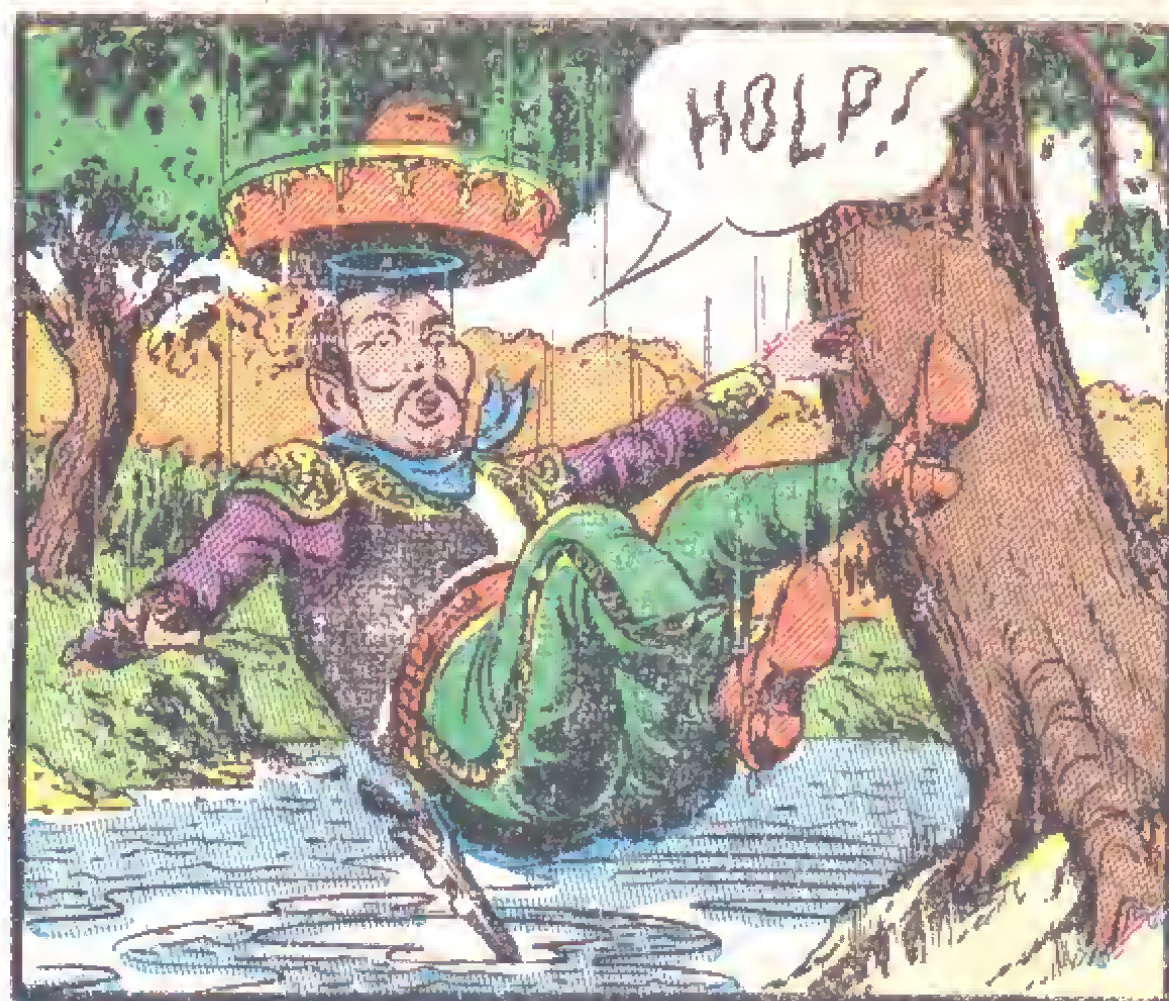
EEEEEE! THAT TREE! SOMETHING MOVES IN ITS BRANCHES!



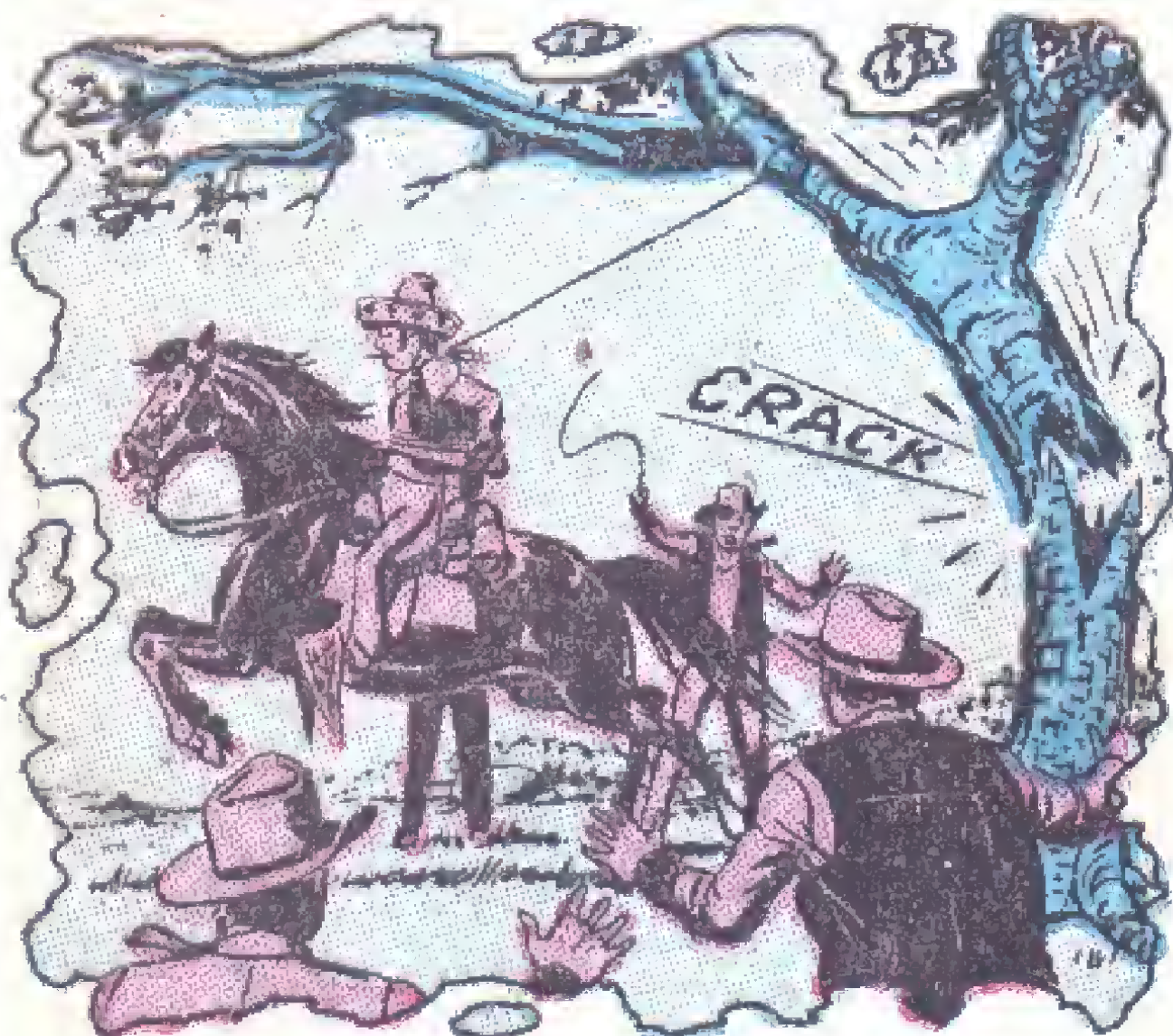
THE MAIDENS SCREAM! SOMETHING IS WRONG!

MAIDENS OFTEN SCREECH FOR NOTHING. —BUT THESE CRIES CARRY **TERROR** IN THEM...

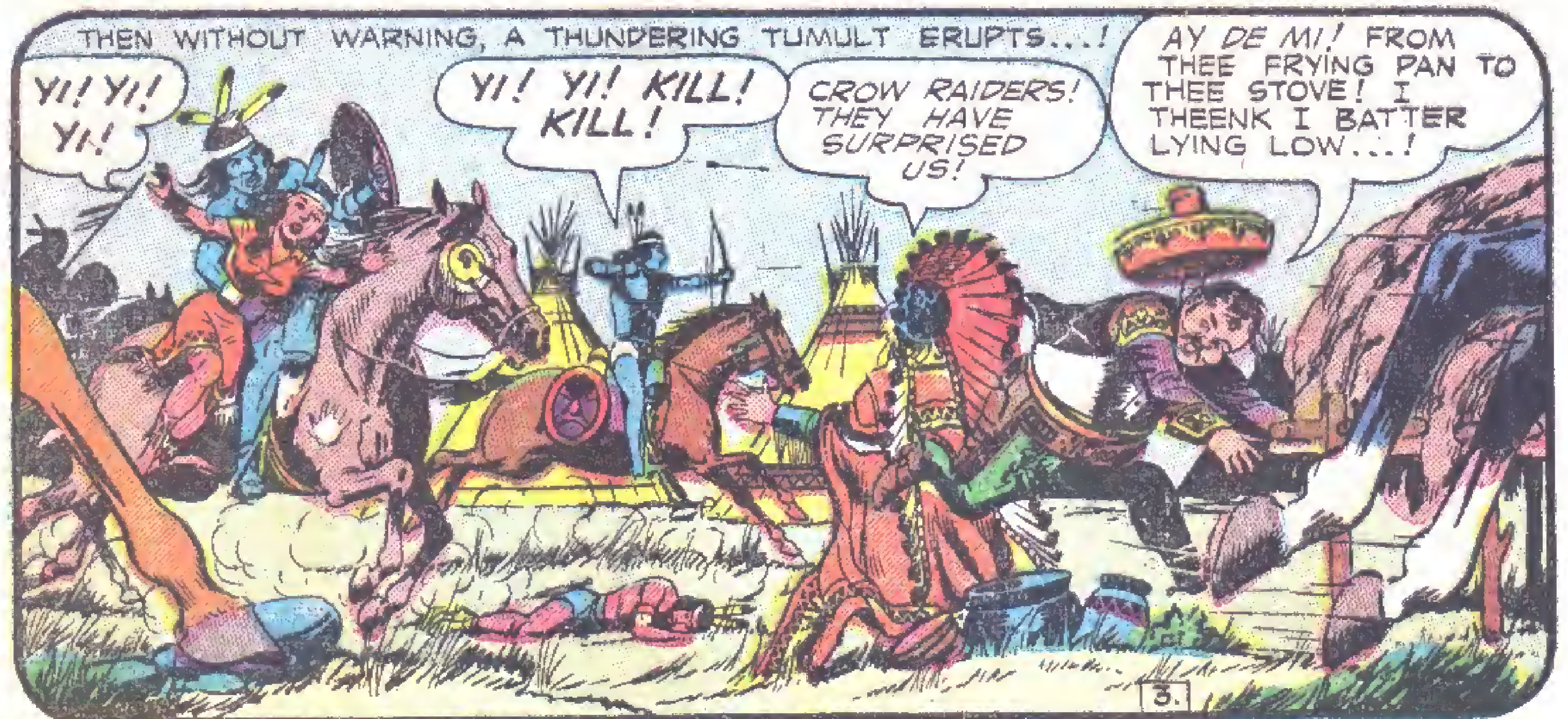


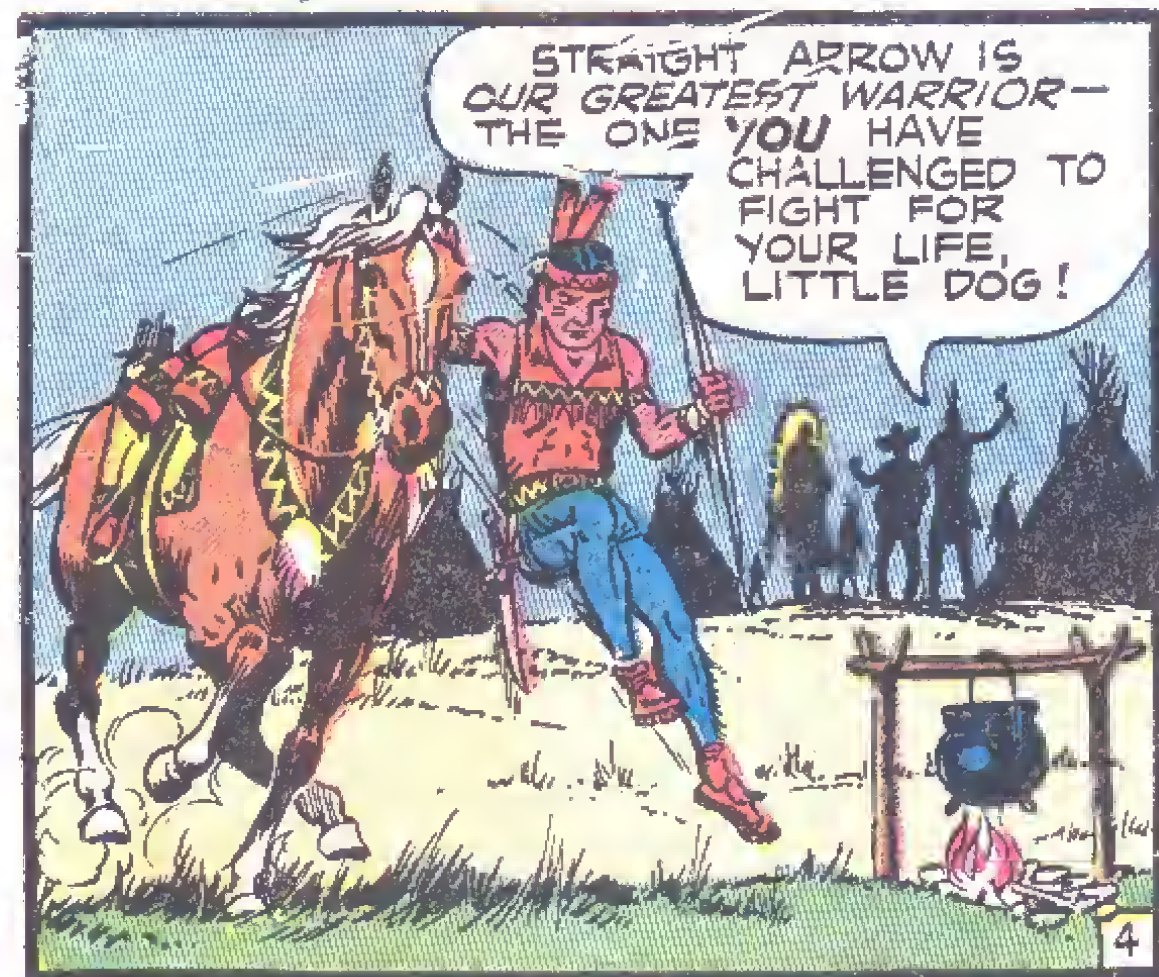
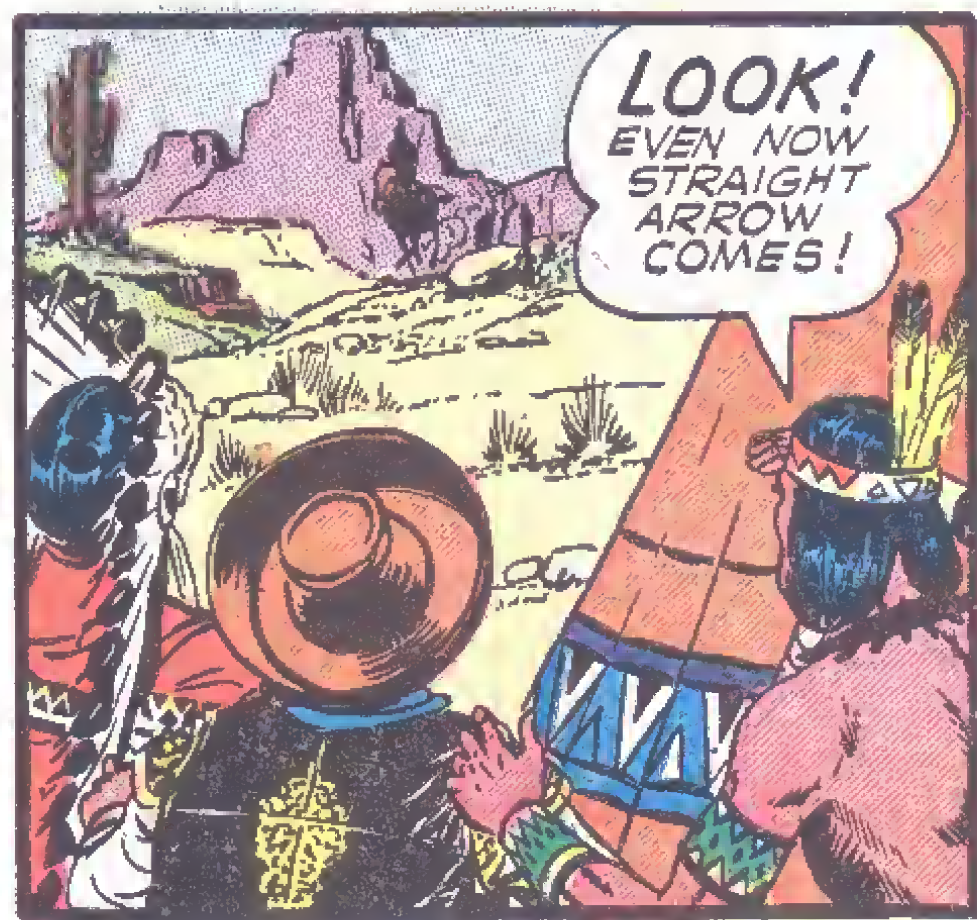
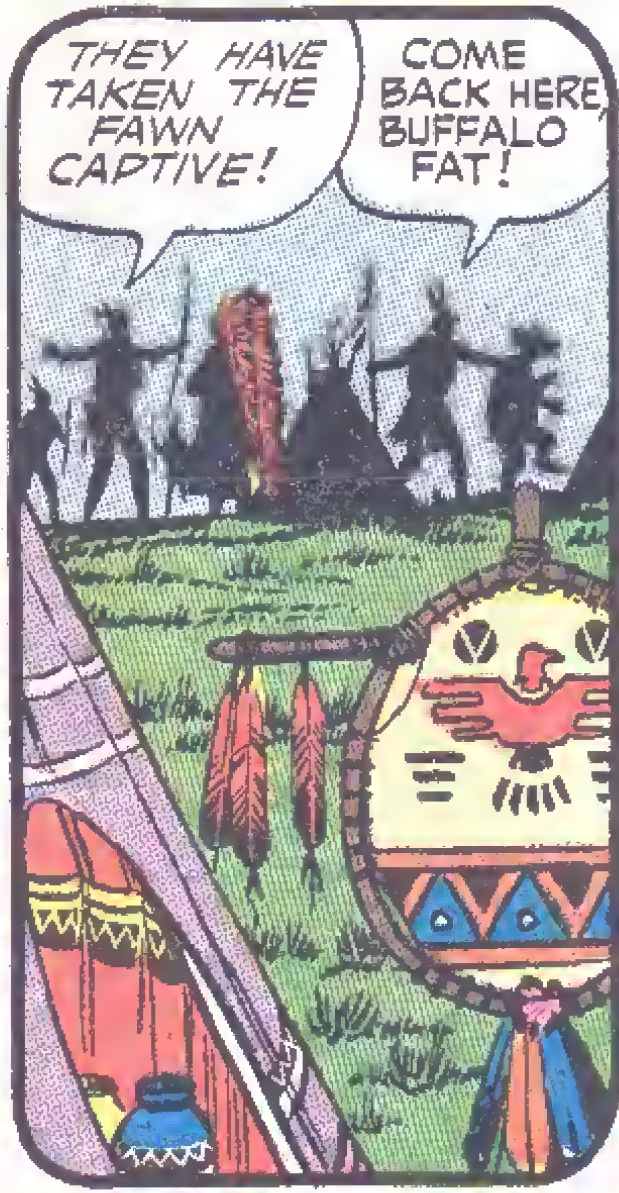


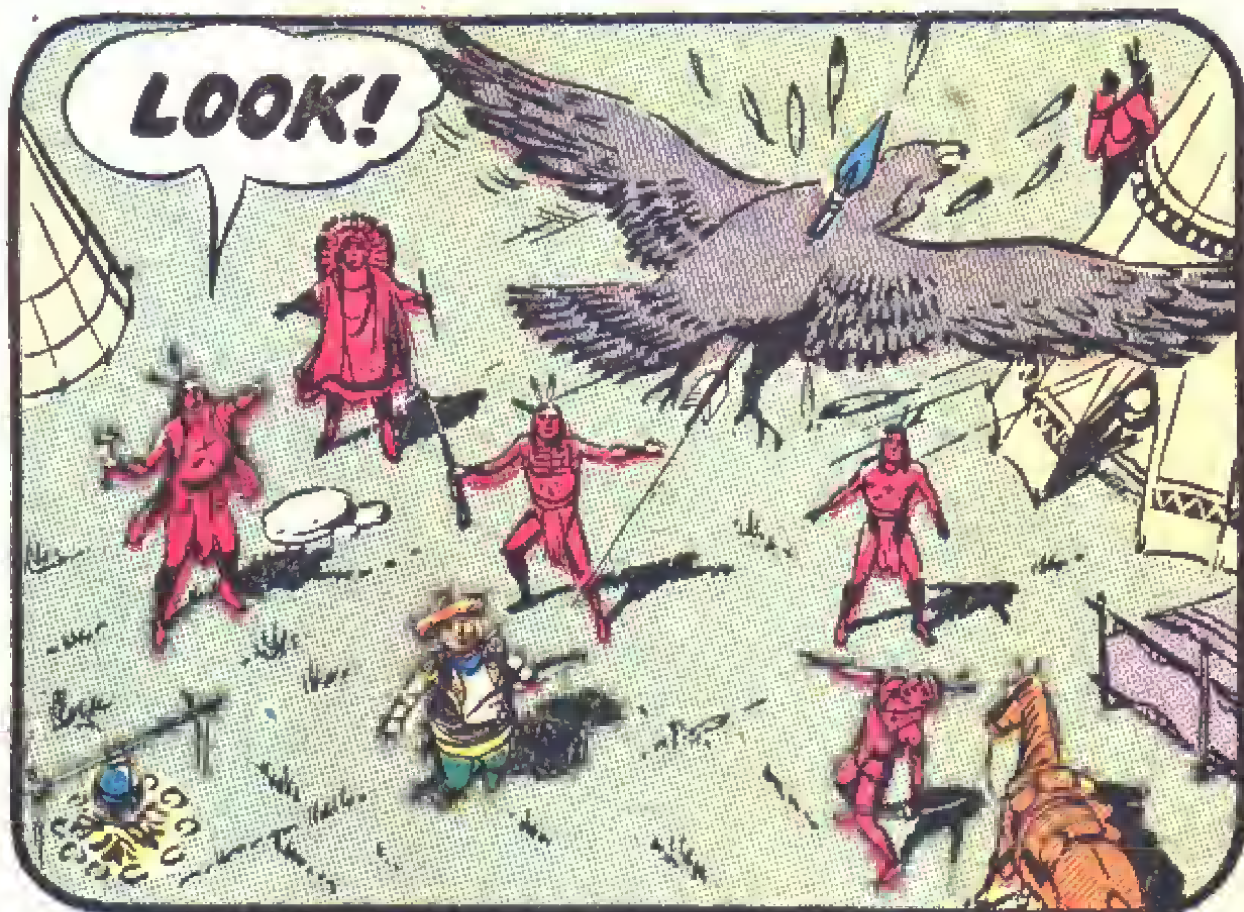
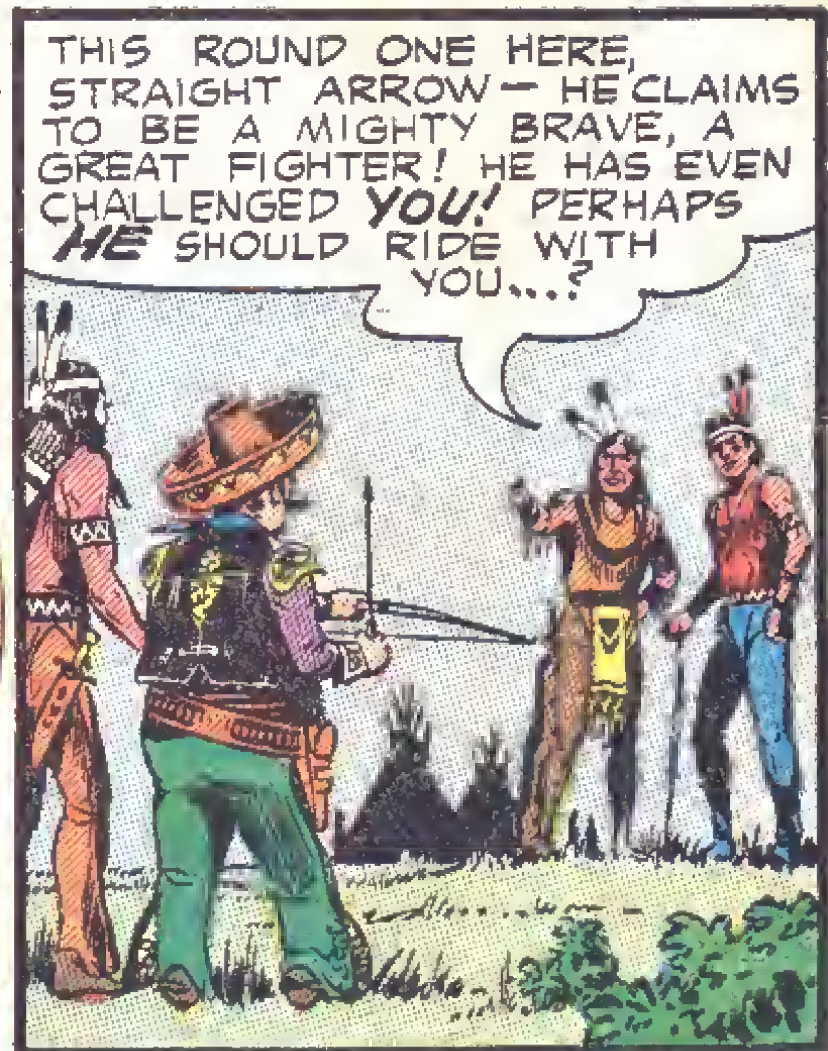
BUT THE COMANCHES' CAPTIVE IS WILY.
HE KNOWS THE CUSTOMS AND LAWS
OF THE REDMAN—AND SO...



"...WANCE, SOM' STOOPIID YANQUIS TRY
TO HANG PEDRO FOR HORSIE-STEALING,
BOT PEDRO'S NECK EES TOO STRONG...!"





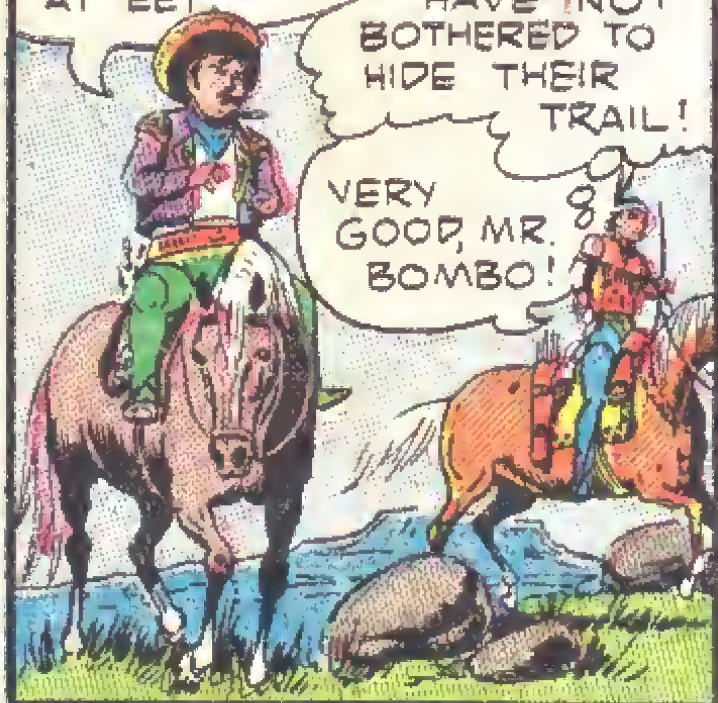


AND SO, STRAIGHT ARROW RIDES OUT WITH PEDRO BOMBO ON THE TRAIL OF THE CROW-5...

I WEEL DOEENG THEE TRAILING. COMANCHE. I AM EXPORT AT EET!

HOLDING THE CHIEF'S DAUGHTER HOSTAGE, THE CROWS HAVE NOT BOTHERED TO HIDE THEIR TRAIL!

VERY GOOD, MR. BOMBO!



NEAR NIGHTFALL...

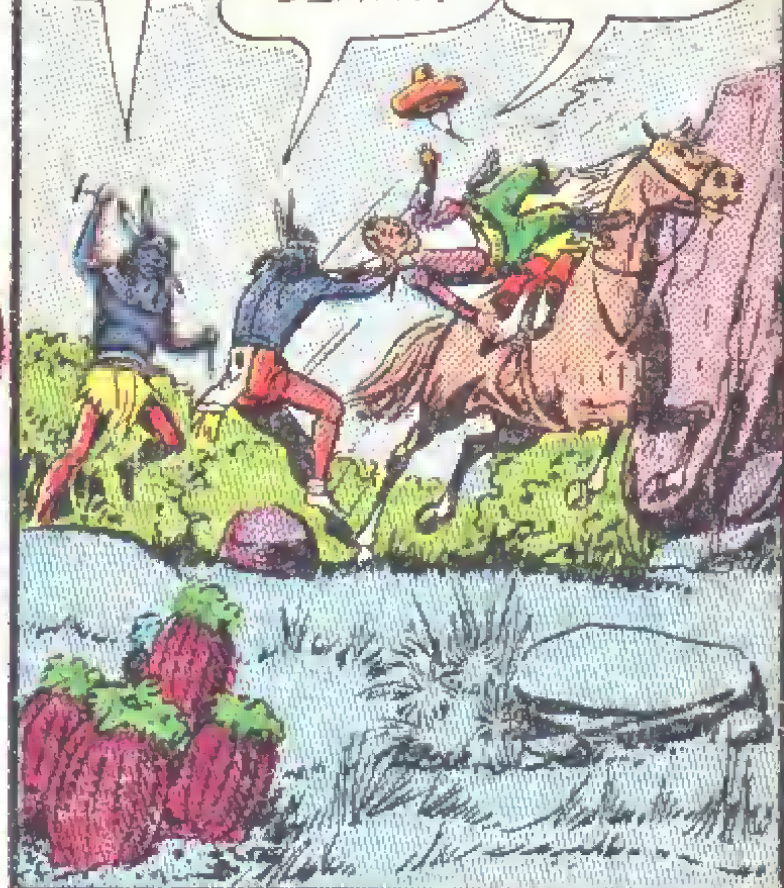
A-HA! LOOK, STRAIGHT ARROW! —THEE CROW VILLAGE! I TOL' YOU PEDRO EES EXPORT TRAILER!



WHO SPIES ON THE CROWS?

SOME FOOL WHO SEEKS DEATH!

HOLP! STRAIGHT ARROW! HOLP!

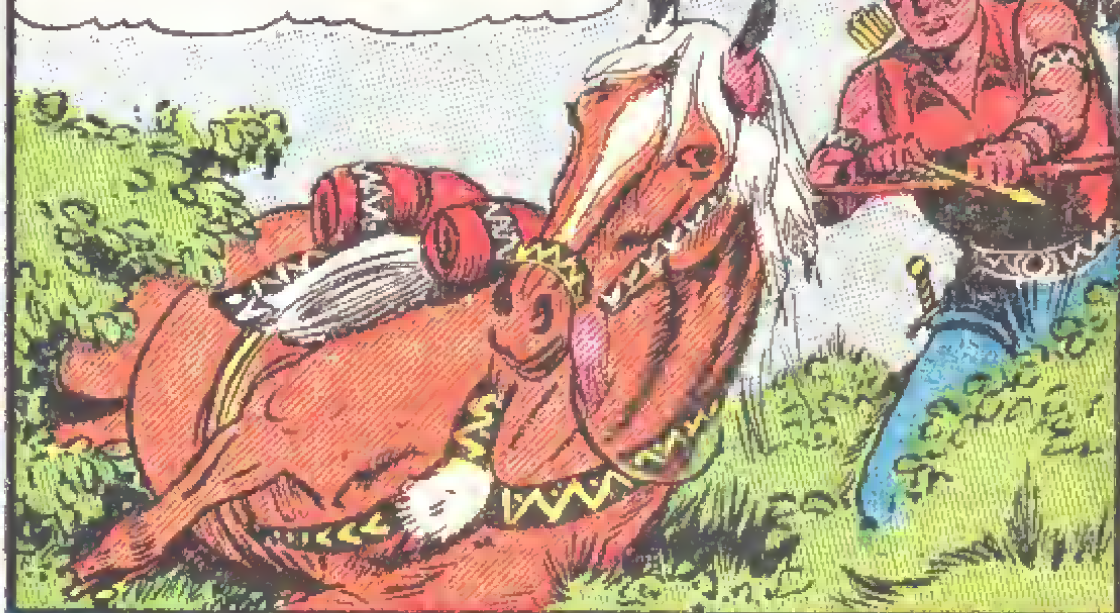


HE CRIES FOR STRAIGHT ARROW! CAN HE BE NEAR?

IF HE IS, THIS IS NO PLACE FOR US! QUICK! LET US HURRY THIS FAT PIG TO THE CAMP!



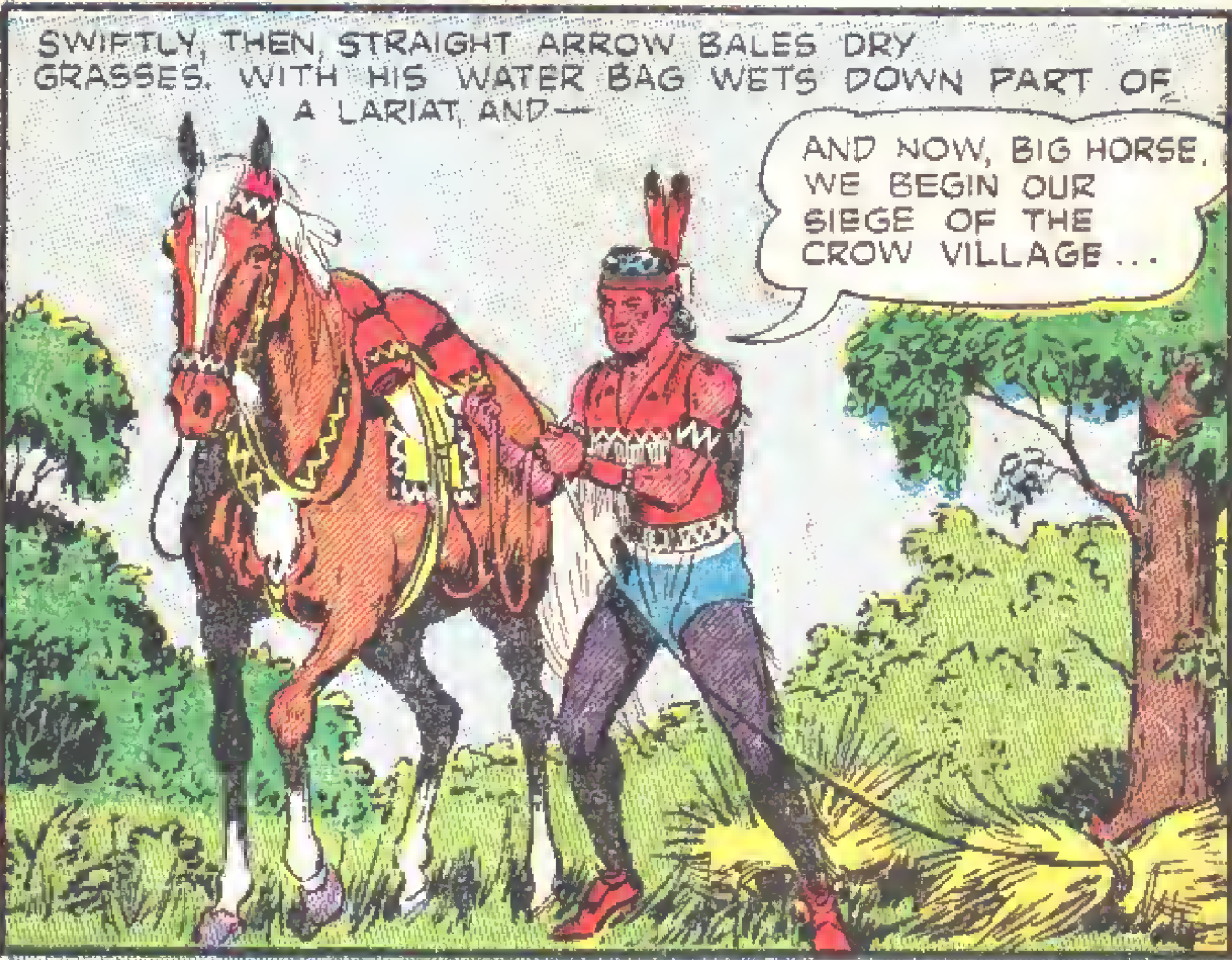
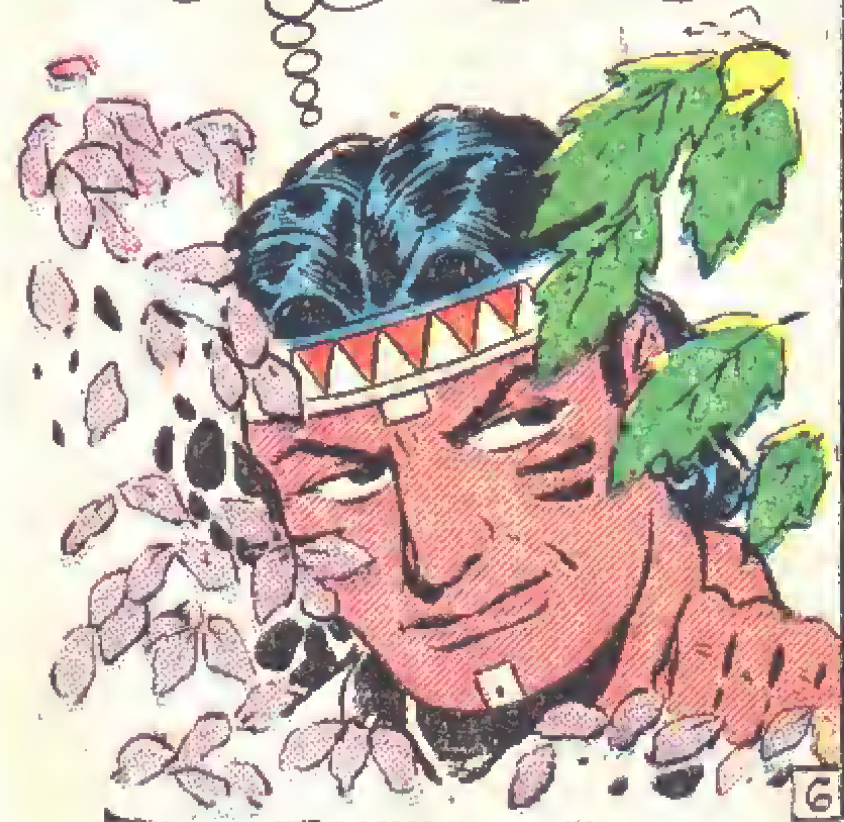
I FIGURED CORRECTLY! THE FAT PEDRO MADE A GOOD STALKING HORSE—AND AS I HOPED, THE CROWS TOOK HIM PRISONER TO QUESTION HIM ABOUT ME...!

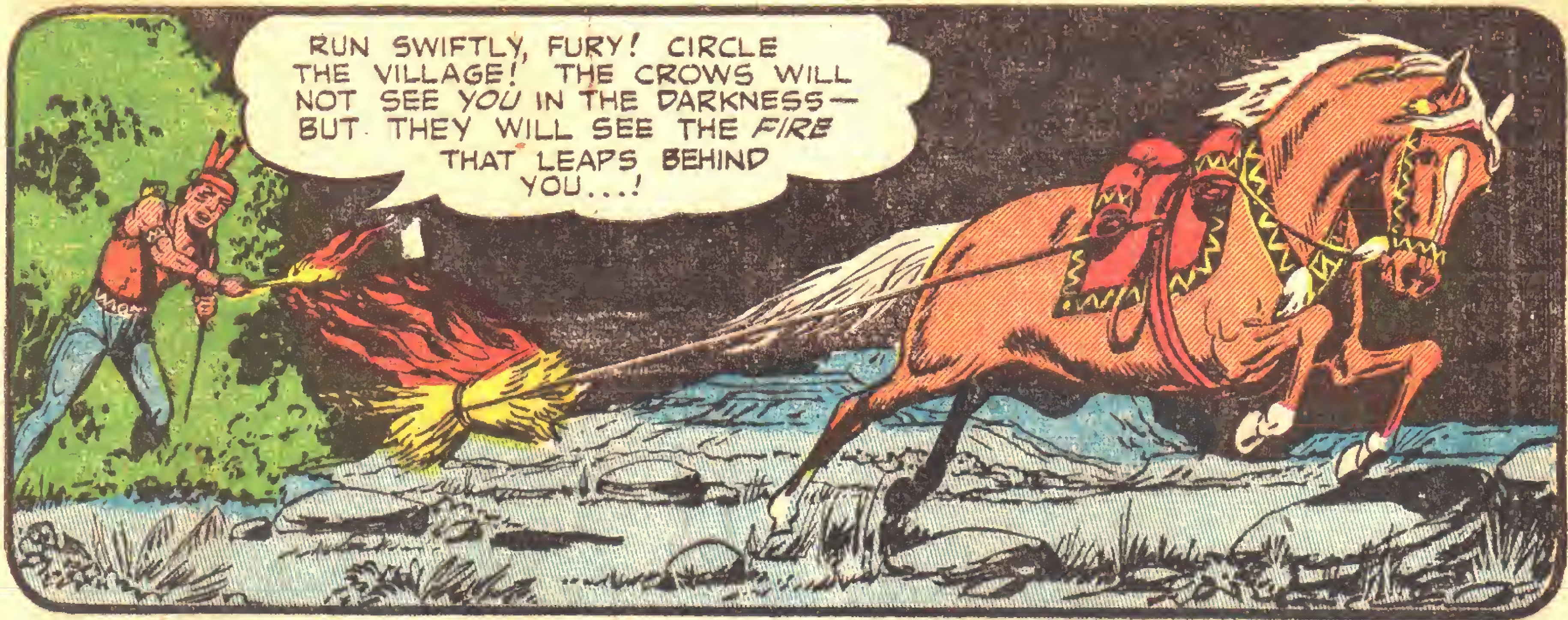


...THEY WILL BE NERVOUS NOW, READY TO START AT EVERY SHADOW... THEY WILL BE EASY VICTIMS OF TERROR...!

SWIFTLY, THEN, STRAIGHT ARROW BALES DRY GRASSES. WITH HIS WATER BAG WETS DOWN PART OF A LARIAT, AND—

AND NOW, BIG HORSE, WE BEGIN OUR SIEGE OF THE CROW VILLAGE...





RUN SWIFTLY, FURY! CIRCLE THE VILLAGE! THE CROWS WILL NOT SEE YOU IN THE DARKNESS— BUT THEY WILL SEE THE FIRE THAT LEAPS BEHIND YOU....!



SHORTLY THEREAFTER, IN THE CROW VILLAGE...

I TOL' YOU, SEÑOR — PEDRO EES TOO GREEN TO BURN!

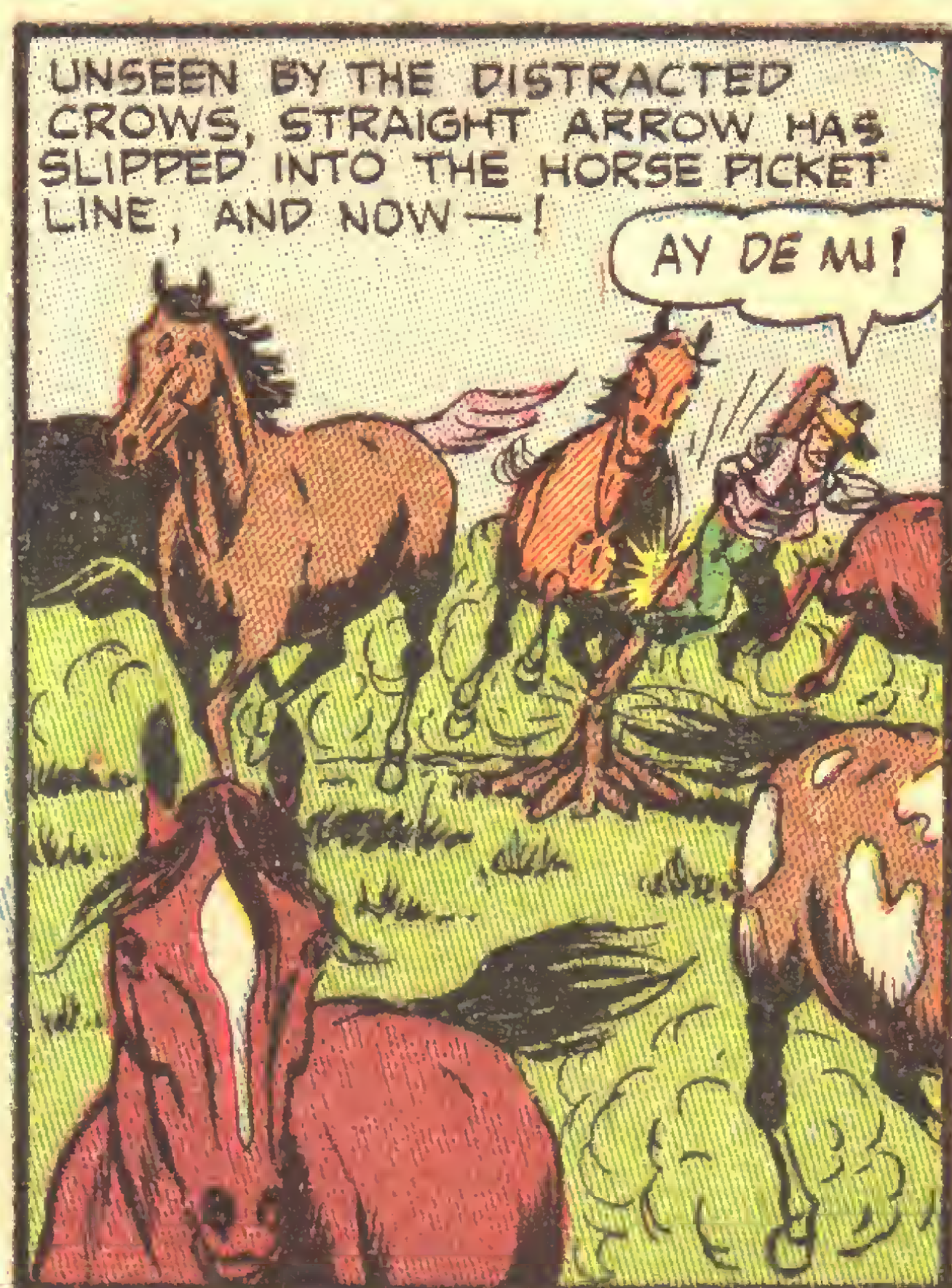
CHIEF BROKEN-NOSE! LOOK! A FIRE DEMON!

THE ENRAGED CHIEF BROKEN-NOSE RUSHES TO WHERE THE SQUAWS GUARD THE FAWN, AND...



LISTEN! WHAT IS THAT THUNDER? — OUR PONY HERD! **STAMPEDING!**

?

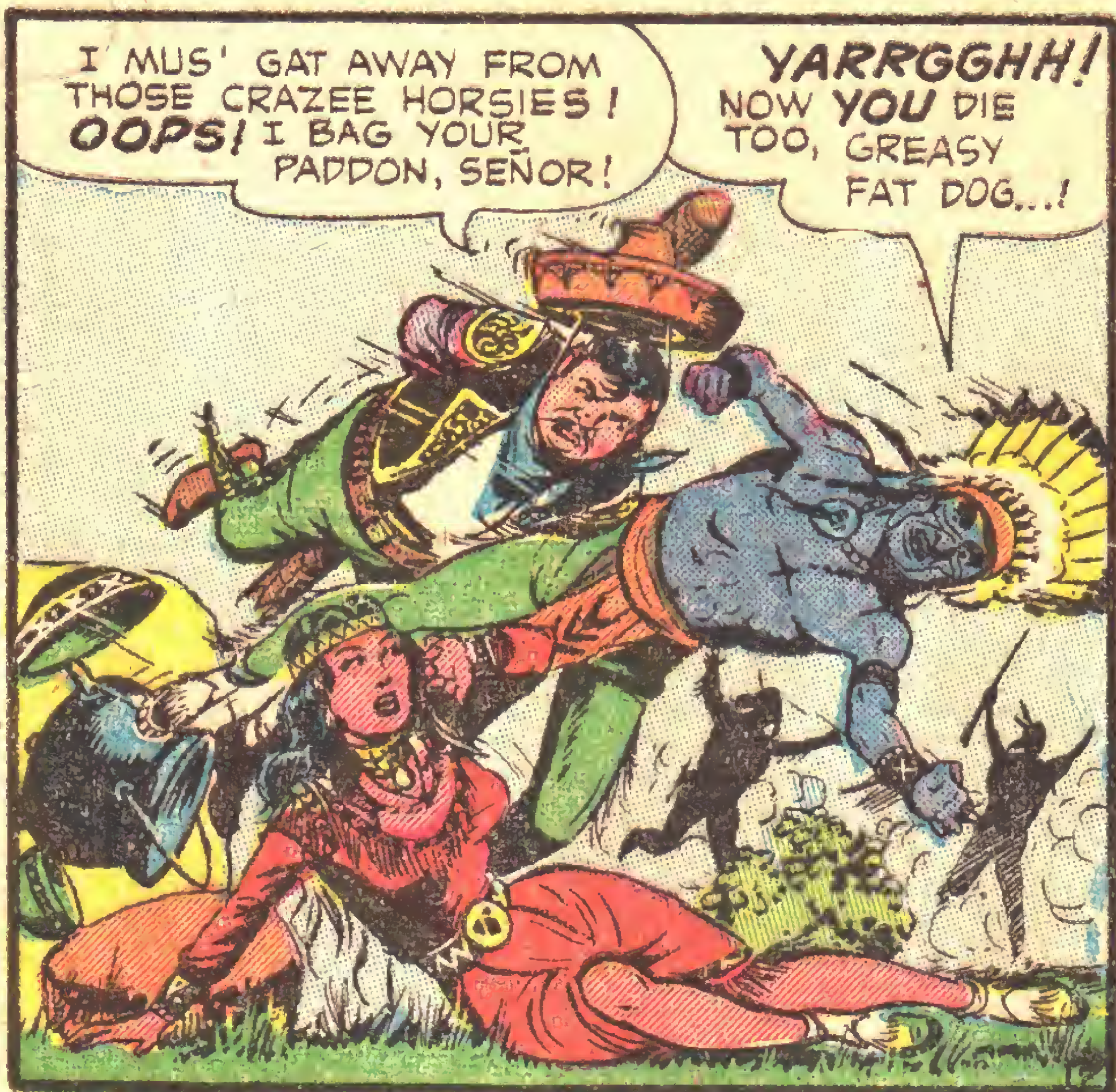


UNSEEN BY THE DISTRACTED CROWS, STRAIGHT ARROW HAS SLIPPED INTO THE HORSE PICKET LINE, AND NOW —!

AY DE MI!

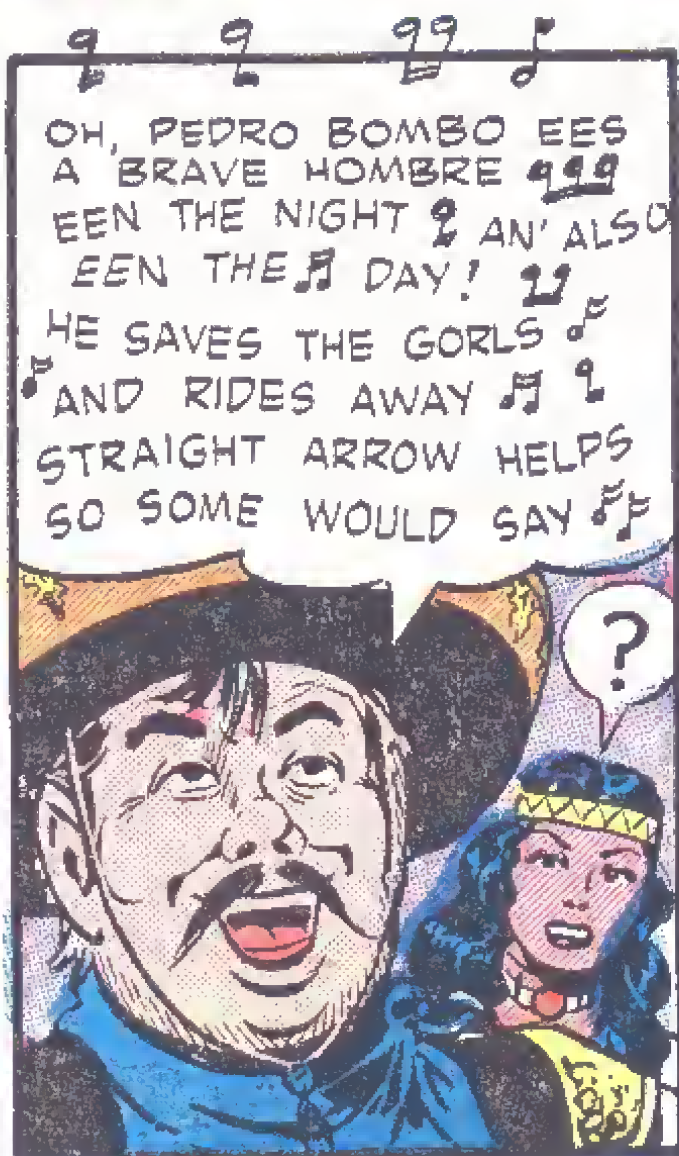
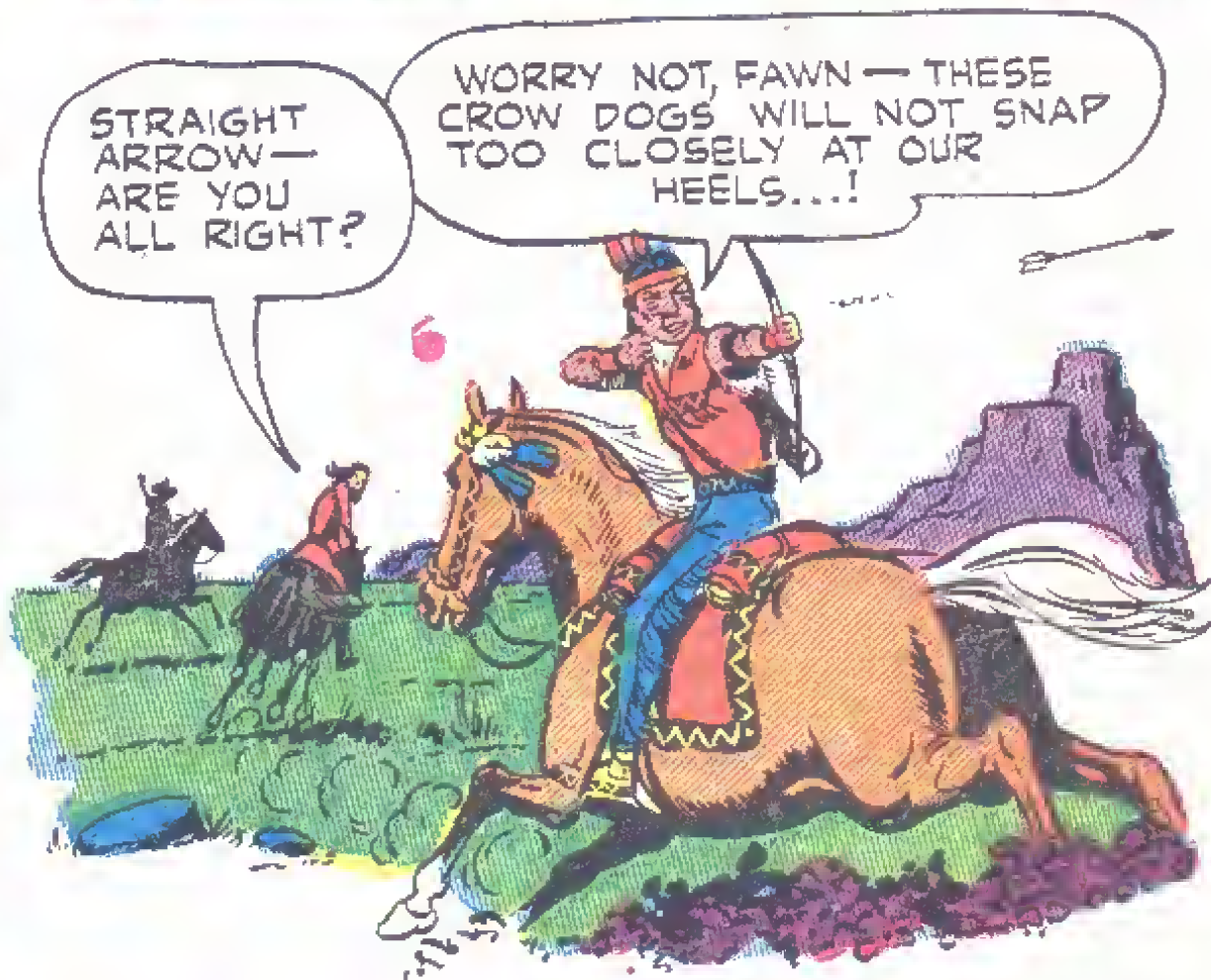
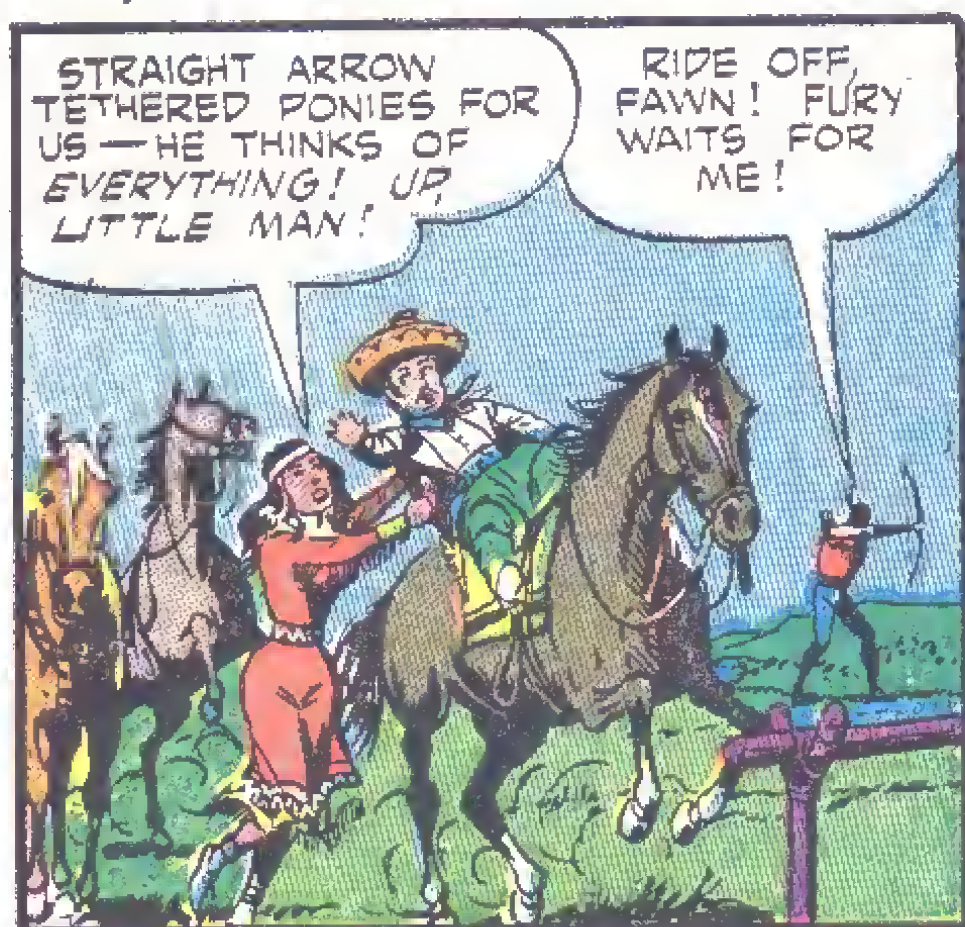


YOU ARE THE CURSE THAT BRINGS THESE EVILS UPON US! FOR THAT — YOU **DIE....!**



I MUS' GAT AWAY FROM THOSE CRAZEE HORSIES! **OOPS!** I BAG YOUR PADDON, SEÑOR!

YARRGGHH! NOW YOU DIE TOO, GREASY FAT DOG....!



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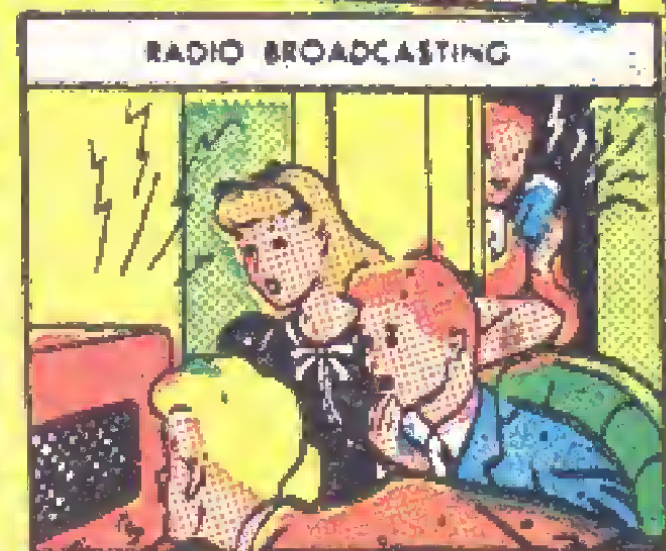
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STRAIGHT ARROW

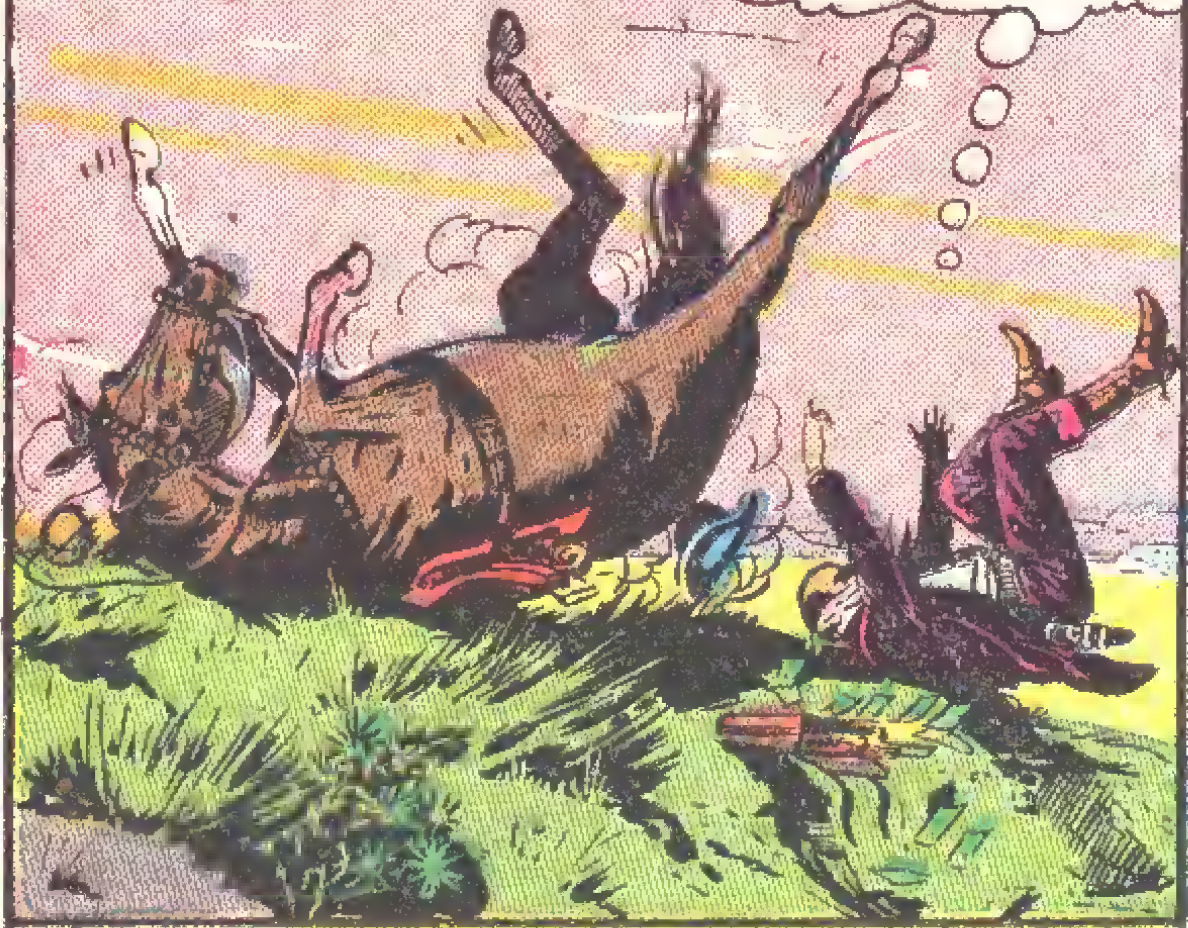
OUT OF THE NIGHT, DEATH COMES STALKING THE GOLDEN STALLION, FURY! BULLETS SLICE THE AIR AS THE GREAT COMANCHE WAR CHIEF STRUGGLES TO SAVE THE LIFE OF THE GALLANT HORSE! BUT HIS EFFORTS ARE DOOMED TO FAILURE — UNLESS HE CAN LEARN THE IDENTITY OF —

"THE MAN WHO HATED FURY!"



THE SUN IS LOW IN THE WESTERN SKY AS A HORSEMAN GALLOPS FRANTICALLY ACROSS THE TWISTED BREAKS OF THE SUNDOWN MOUNTAINS. SUDDENLY —

THE POSSE'S RIGHT BEHIND ME — AND MY BRONC PICKS THIS TIME TO SPRAIN A LEG!

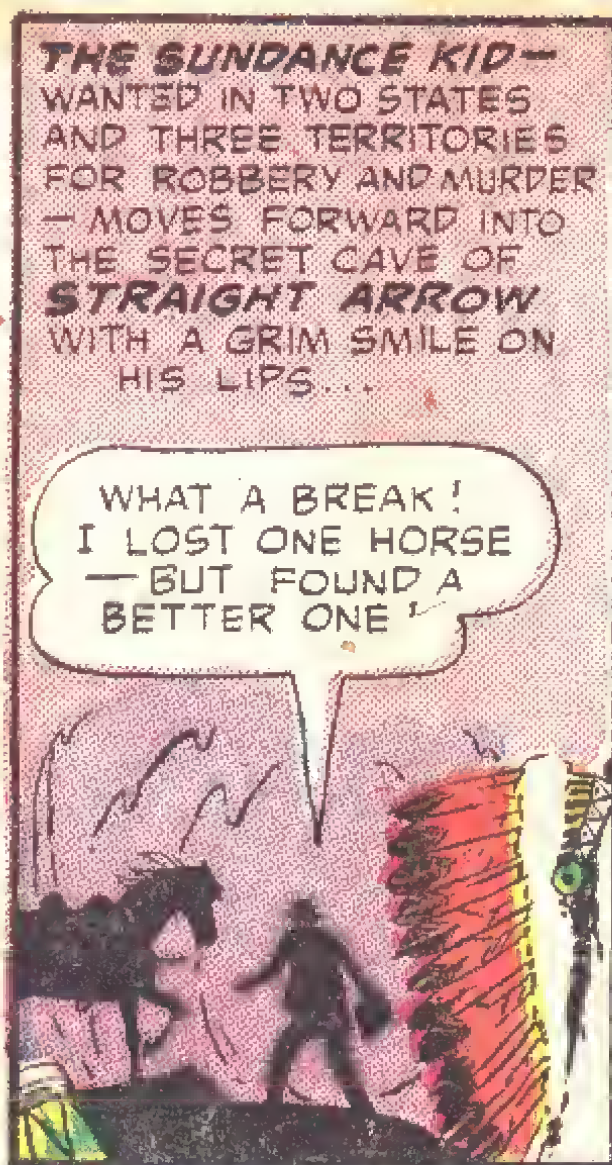


WELL, ANYHOW — THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO TRACK MY BOOTS ON THIS ROCK! I'LL — HEY, WHATS THIS? LOOKS LIKE A CAVE...!





IT IS A CAVE
—AND WHAT
A CAVE!
AND LOOK
AT THAT
PALOMINO!

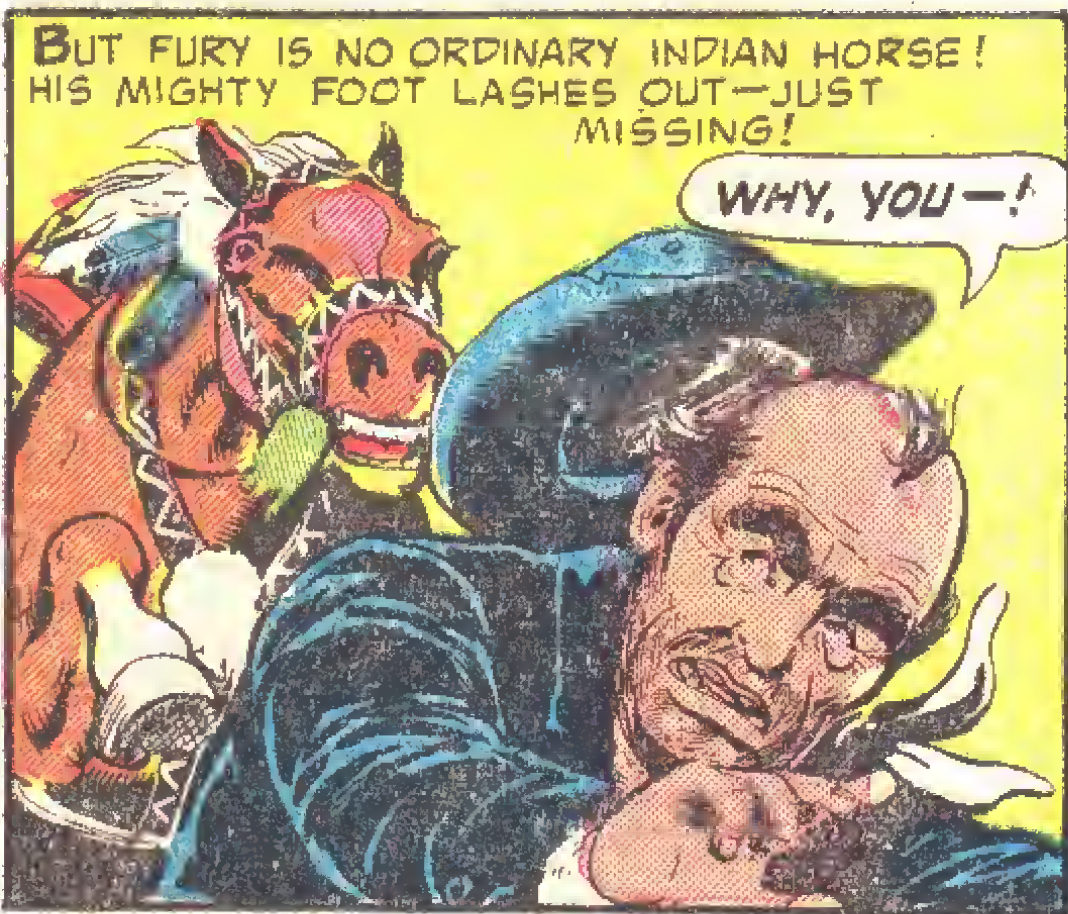


THE SUNDANCE KID—
WANTED IN TWO STATES
AND THREE TERRITORIES
FOR ROBBERY AND MURDER
—MOVES FORWARD INTO
THE SECRET CAVE OF
STRAIGHT ARROW
WITH A GRIM SMILE ON
HIS LIPS...

WHAT A BREAK!
I LOST ONE HORSE
—BUT FOUND A
BETTER ONE!

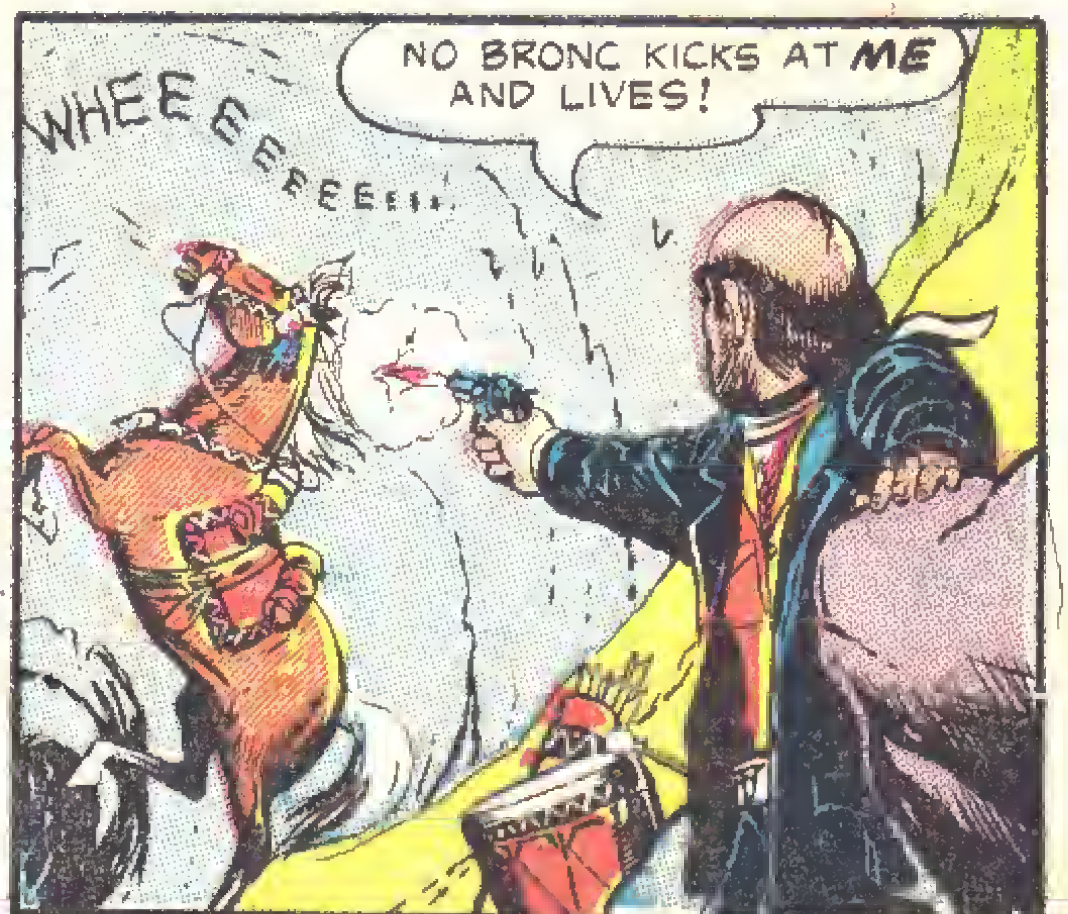


DOGGONE YUH! **STAND
STILL!** NO INJUN BRONC IS
GOIN' TO SAY THE SUNDANCE
KID
CAN'T
MOUNT
HIM!



BUT FURY IS NO ORDINARY INDIAN HORSE!
HIS MIGHTY FOOT LASHES OUT—JUST
MISSING!

WHY, YOU—!



NO BRONC KICKS AT ME
AND LIVES!

WHEE E
FREEEE!



A FEW MINUTES EARLIER—SOME DISTANCE
FROM THE SECRET CAVE—

I'LL TAKE THIS TRAIL,
BOYS. THE HOMBRE
WHO HELD UP
THE AGUA BLANCO
BANK AND KILLED
THE TELLER...

...CAN'T BE
FAR AWAY...



A LITTLE LATER—

A GUNSHOT—
COMING FROM
THE SECRET
CAVE!

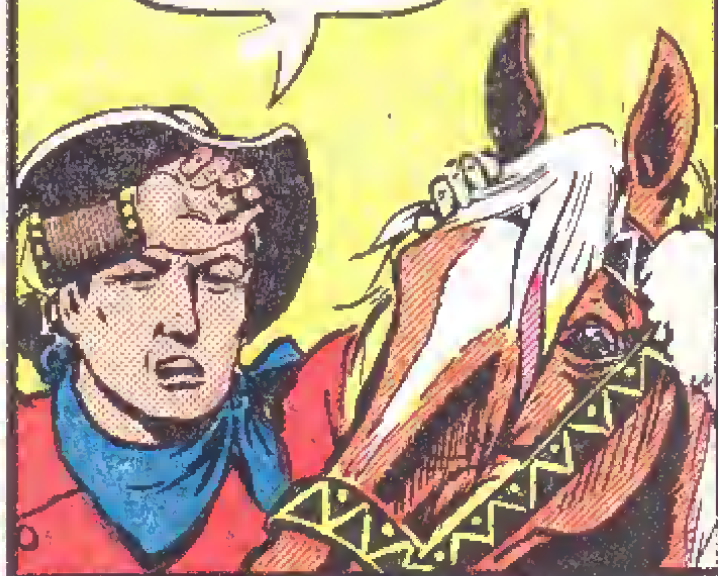


WHOEVER FIRED MUST HAVE DUCKED OUT—

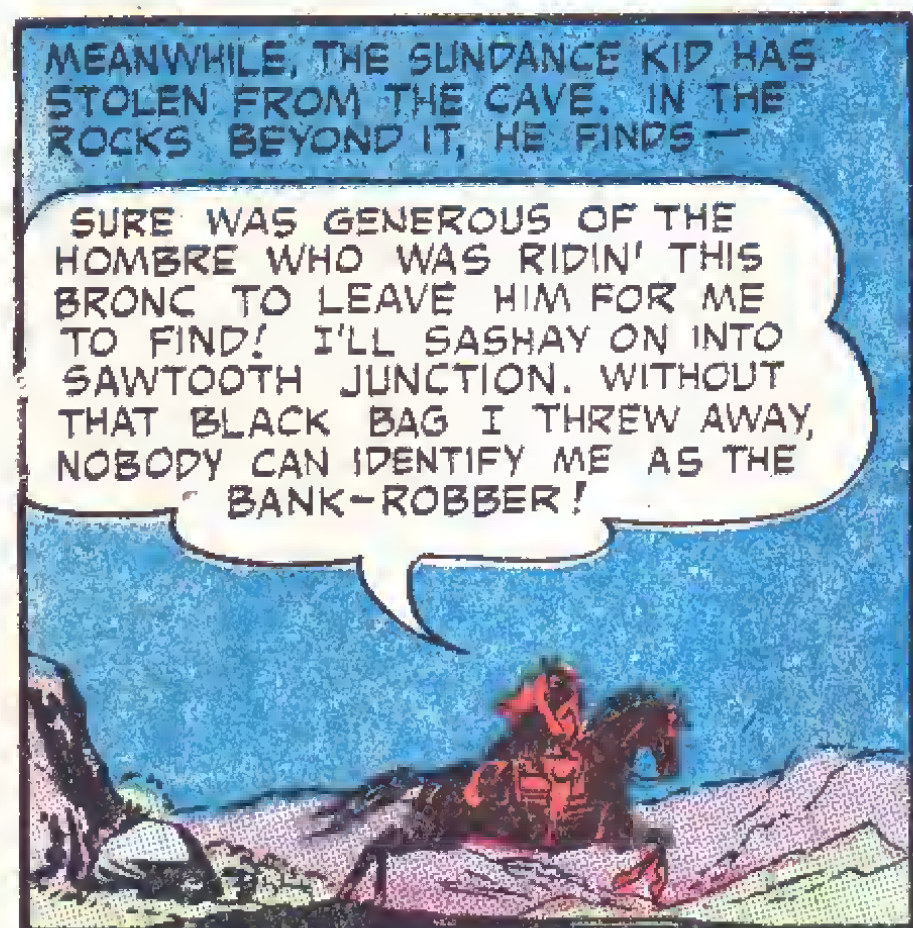
FURY!

FOR A FEW AGONIZING MOMENTS—STEVE ADAMS CROUCHES OVER THE GOLDEN FORM OF THE HORSE HE LOVES, THEN, AS FURY LIFTS HIS HEAD—

WHEWWW! YOU SURE SCARED ME BAD, FURY! ...IT'S JUST A FLESH WOUND, AND YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT... BUT WHERE'S THE SIDEWINDER WHO SHOT YOU?

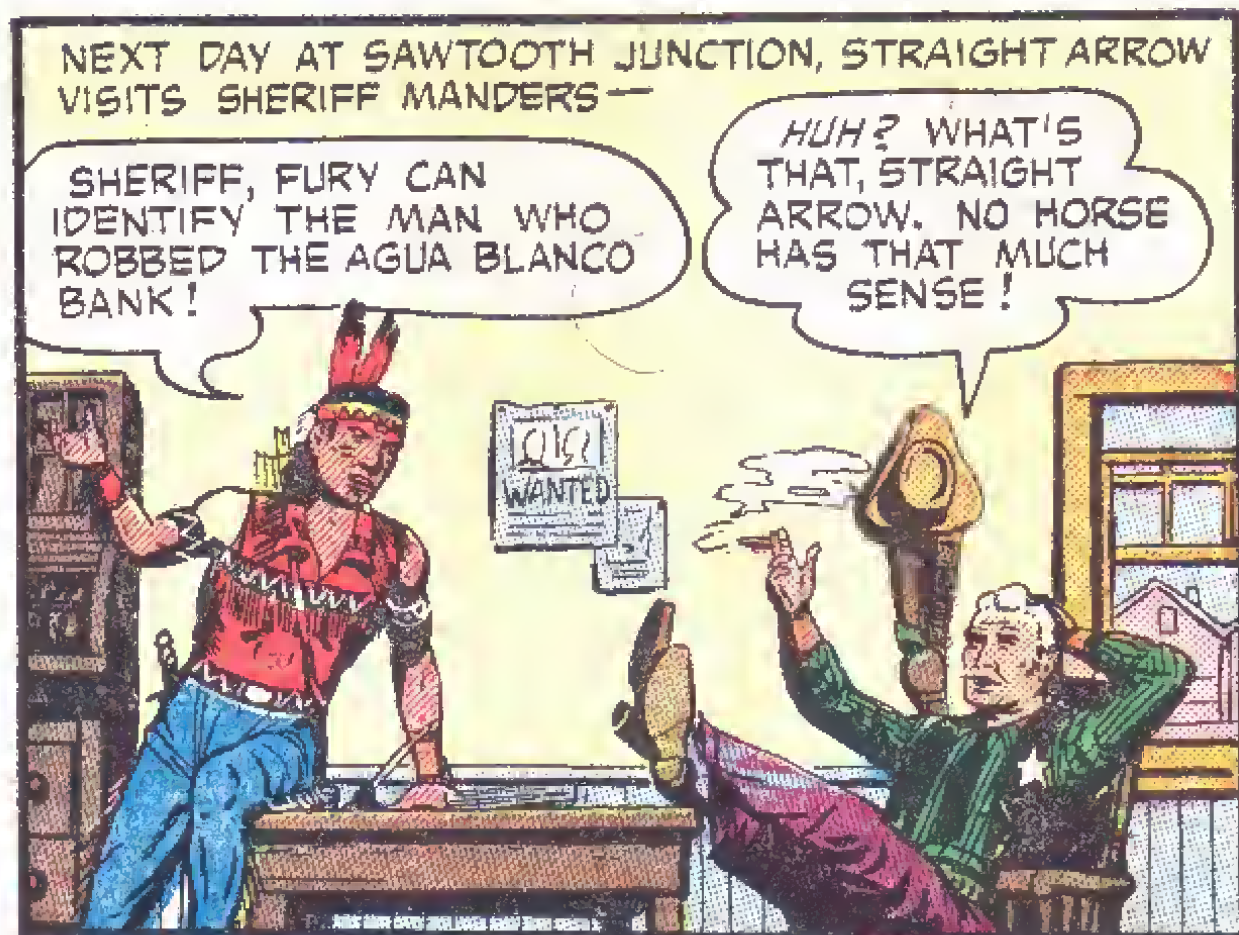


HE LEFT HIS BOOTMARKS PLAIN AS DAY... WHAT'S THAT? A BLACK LEATHER BAG—TOSSED UNDER THAT BUSH! LOOKS LIKE THE BAG THE KILLER TOOK FROM THE AGUA BLANCO BANK!



MEANWHILE, THE SUNDANCE KID HAS STOLEN FROM THE CAVE. IN THE ROCKS BEYOND IT, HE FINDS—

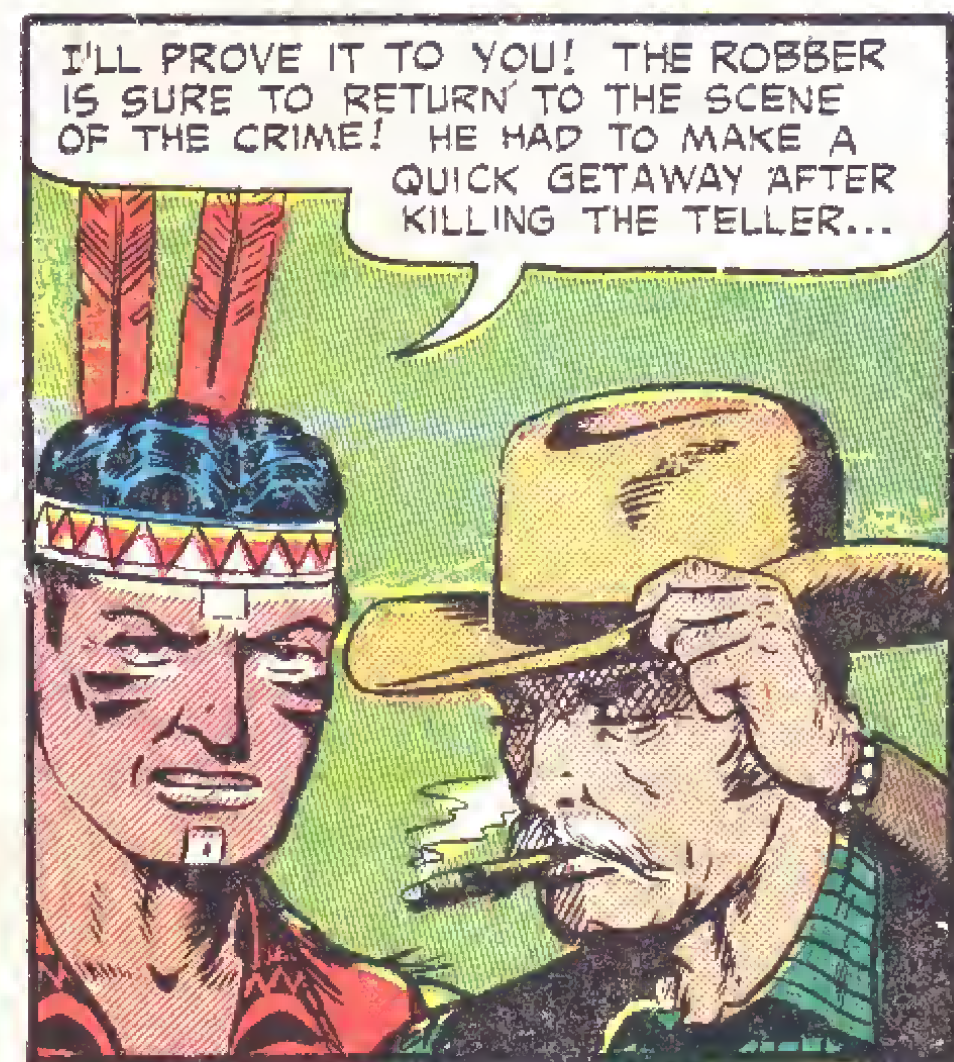
SURE WAS GENEROUS OF THE HOMBRE WHO WAS RIDIN' THIS BRONC TO LEAVE HIM FOR ME TO FIND! I'LL SASHAY ON INTO SAWTOOTH JUNCTION. WITHOUT THAT BLACK BAG I THREW AWAY, NOBODY CAN IDENTIFY ME AS THE BANK-ROBBER!



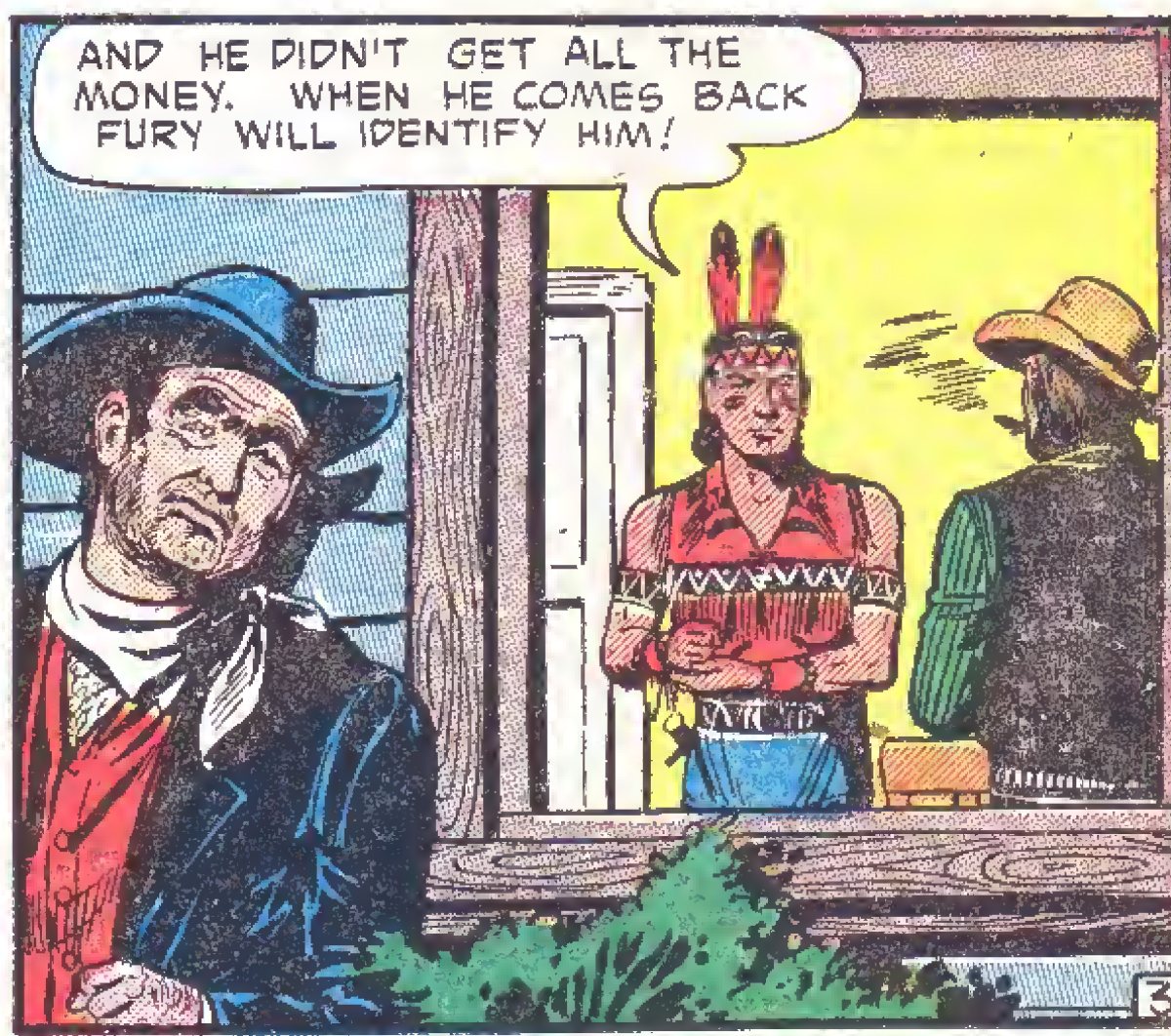
NEXT DAY AT SAWTOOTH JUNCTION, STRAIGHT ARROW VISITS SHERIFF MANDERS—

SHERIFF, FURY CAN IDENTIFY THE MAN WHO ROBBED THE AGUA BLANCO BANK!

HUH? WHAT'S THAT, STRAIGHT ARROW. NO HORSE HAS THAT MUCH SENSE!



I'LL PROVE IT TO YOU! THE ROBBER IS SURE TO RETURN TO THE SCENE OF THE CRIME! HE HAD TO MAKE A QUICK GETAWAY AFTER KILLING THE TELLER...

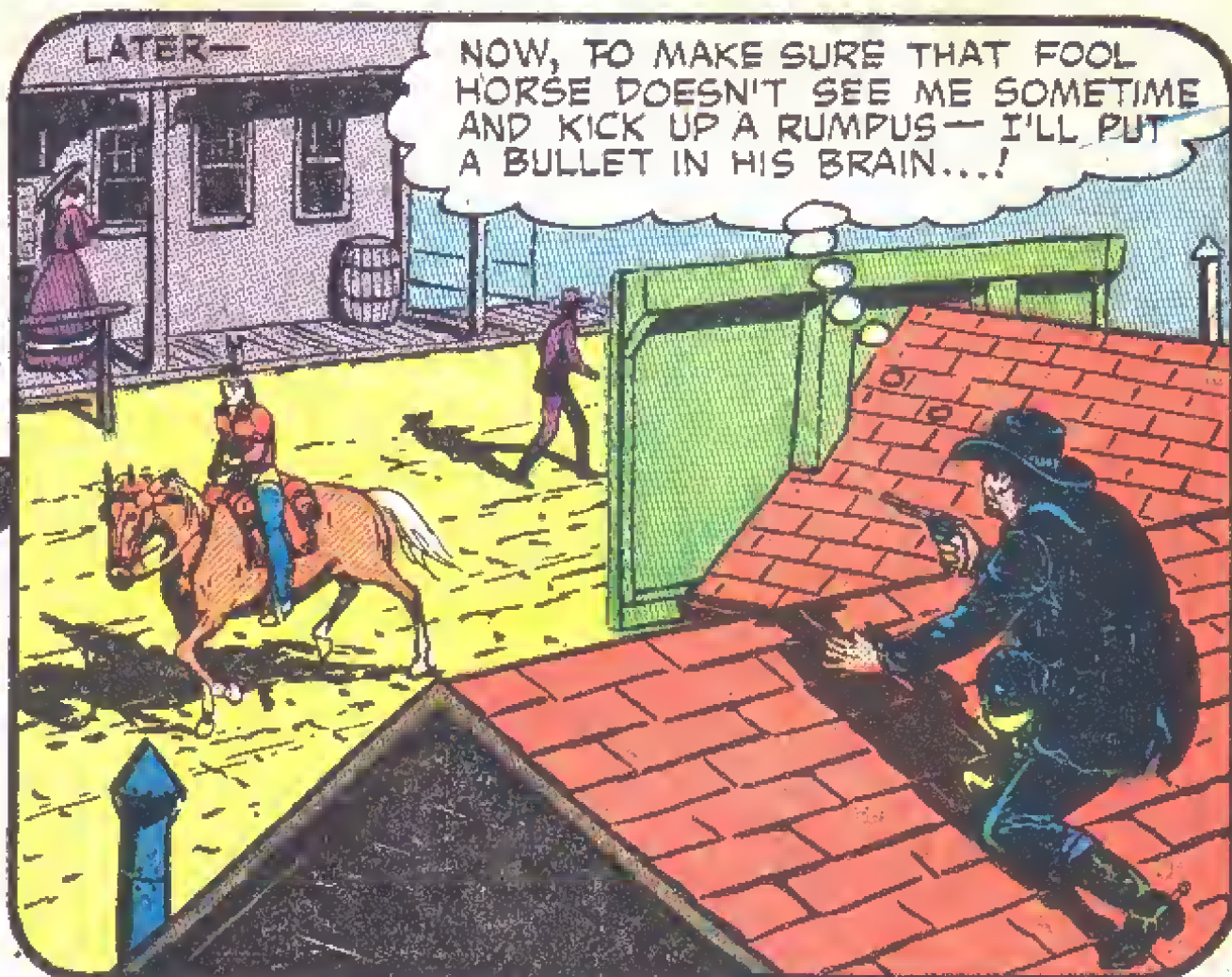


AND HE DIDN'T GET ALL THE MONEY. WHEN HE COMES BACK FURY WILL IDENTIFY HIM!

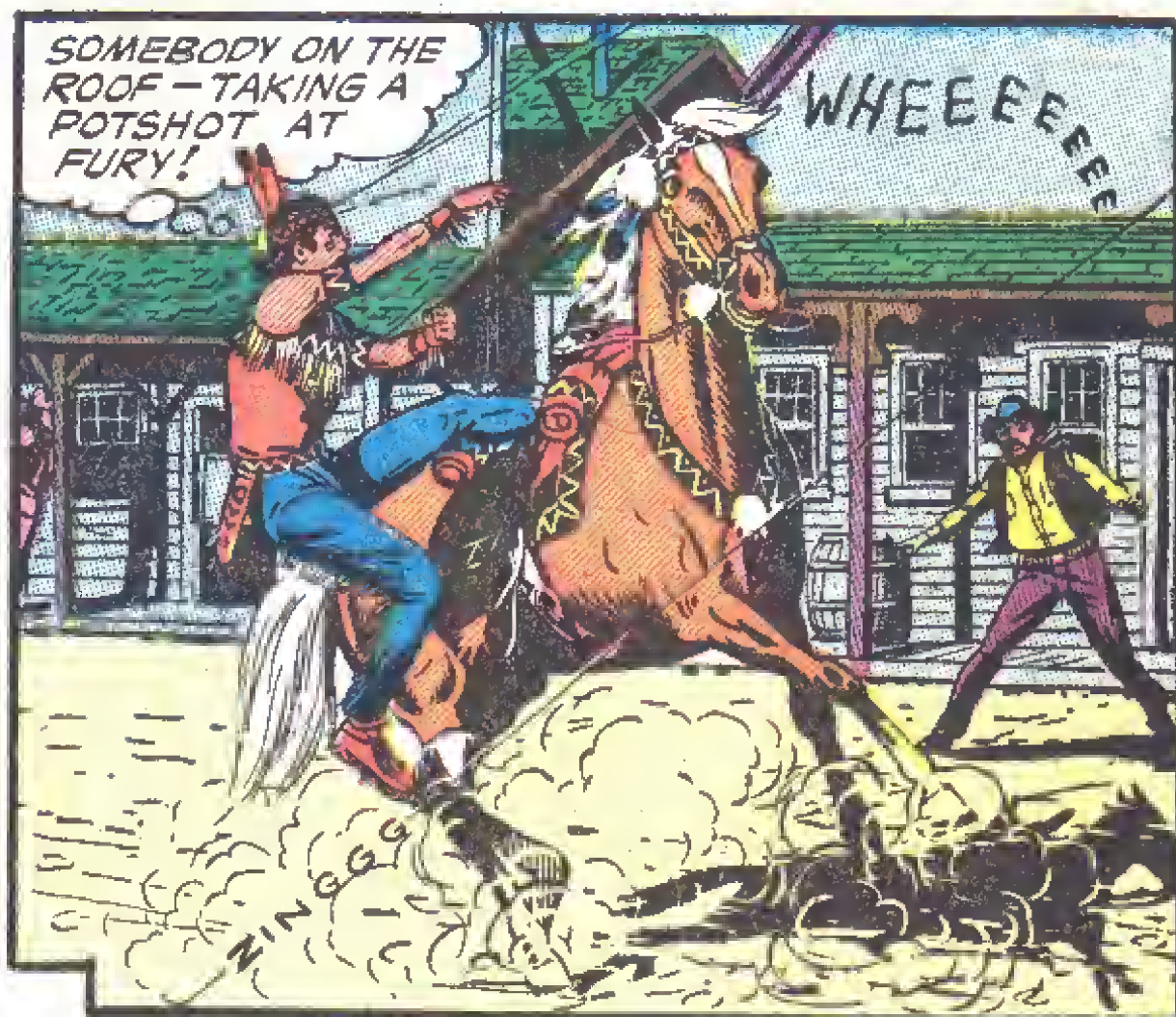
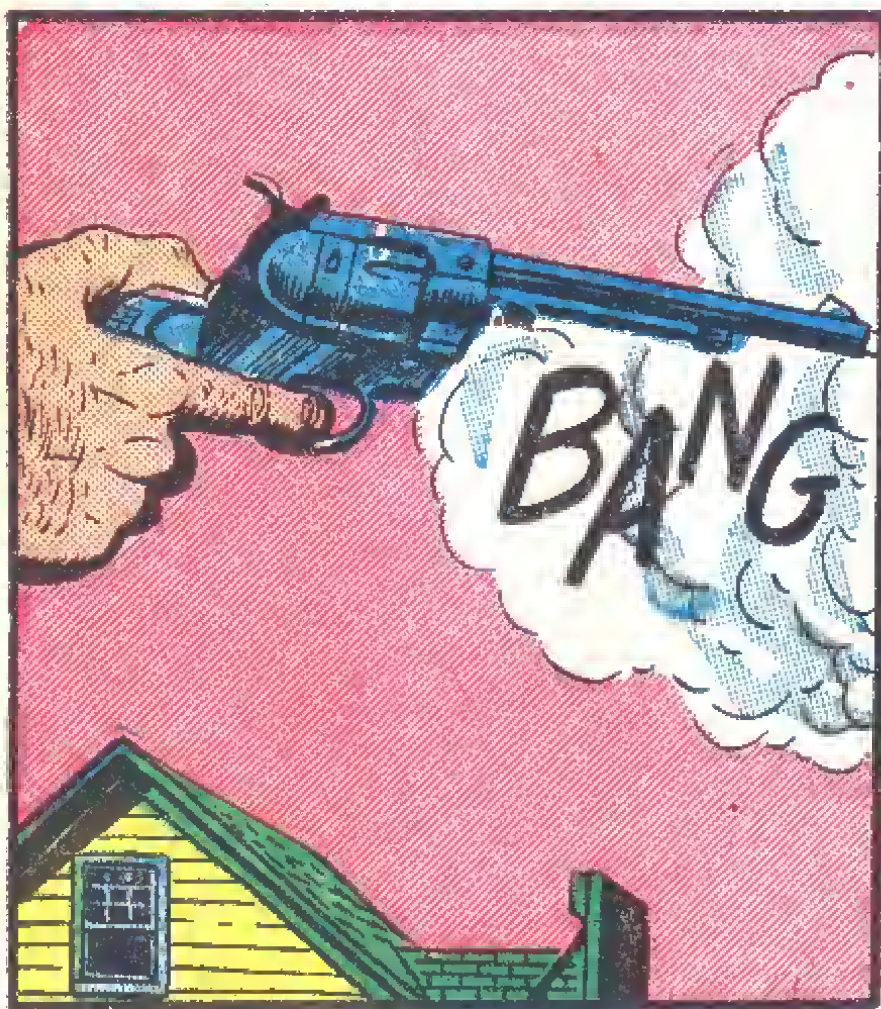
GOOD THING I LISTENED IN ON THAT CONVERSATION. I'LL HAVE TO GET RID OF THAT BRONC OR GET OUT OF TOWN AND NOT GET THE REST OF THAT MONEY!



LATER—

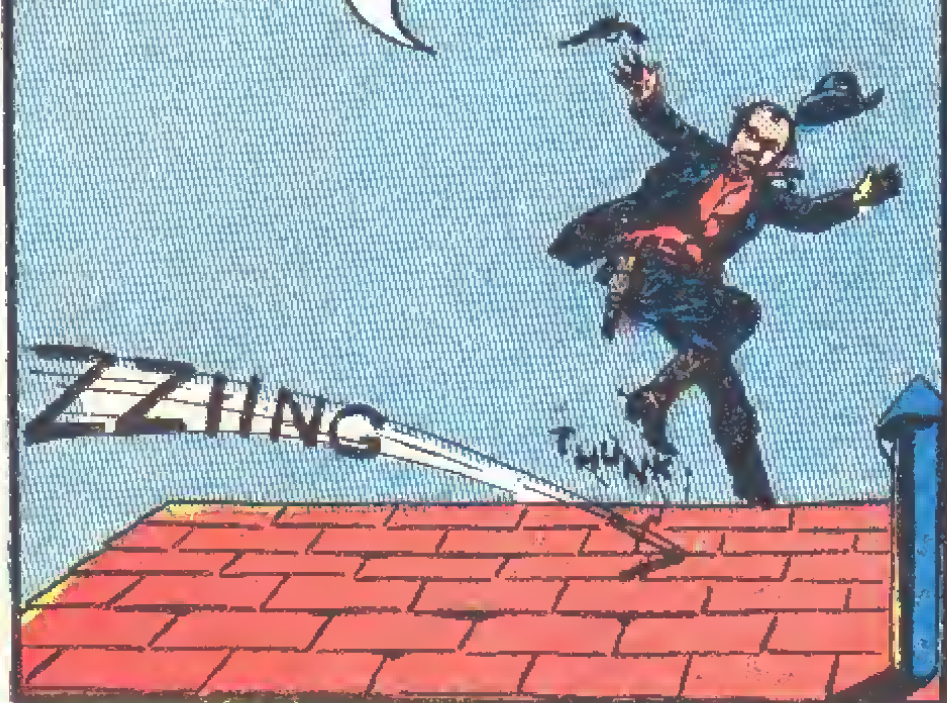


NOW, TO MAKE SURE THAT FOOL HORSE DOESN'T SEE ME SOMETIME AND KICK UP A RUMPUS— I'LL PUT A BULLET IN HIS BRAIN...!

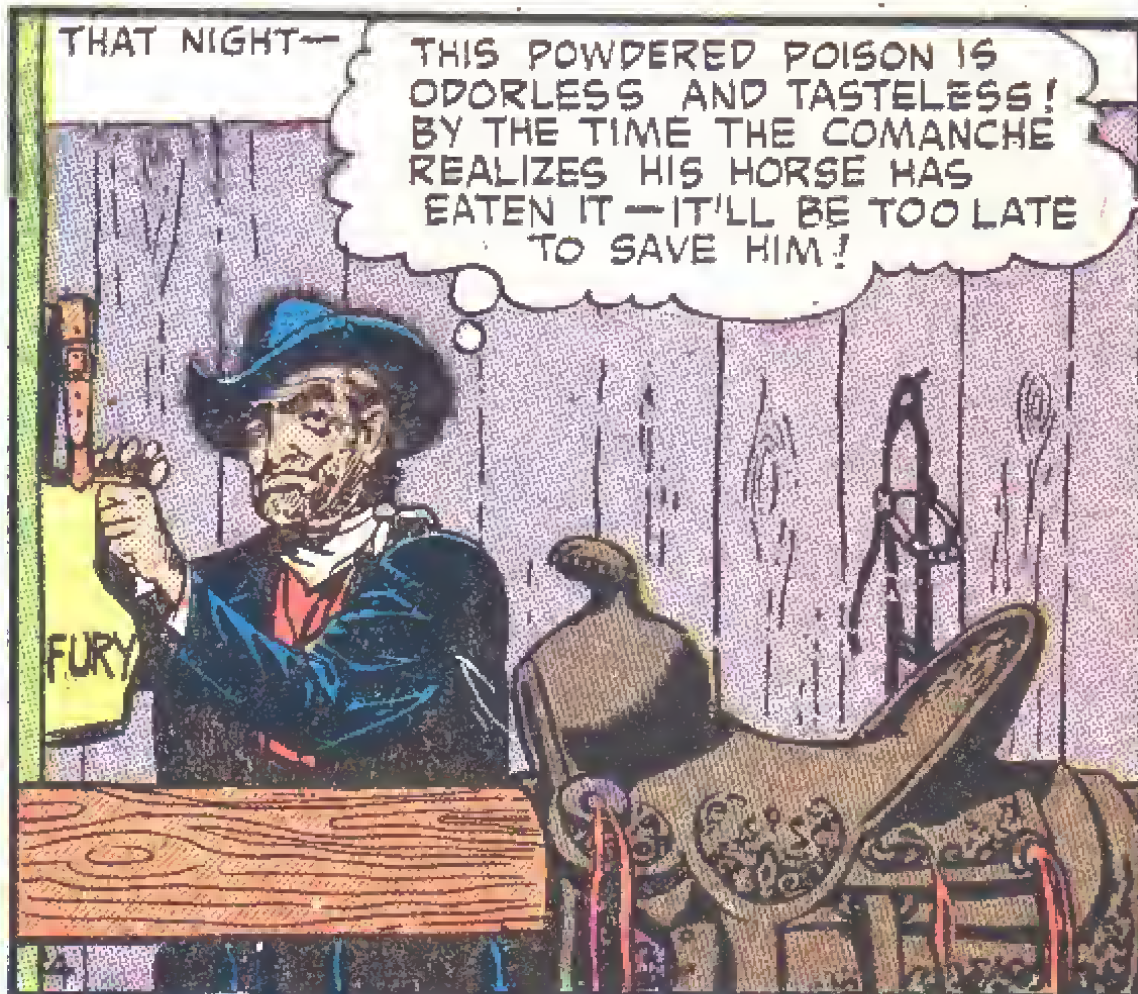


SOMEBODY ON THE ROOF— TAKING A POTSHOT AT FURY!

GULP! THAT INJUN THREW THAT KNIFE FASTER'N MOST HOMBRES CAN YANK A COLT! IT ALMOST GOT ME! GOT TO TRY AGAIN— BUT SOMEWHERE WHERE THAT COMANCHE CAN'T SEE ME!



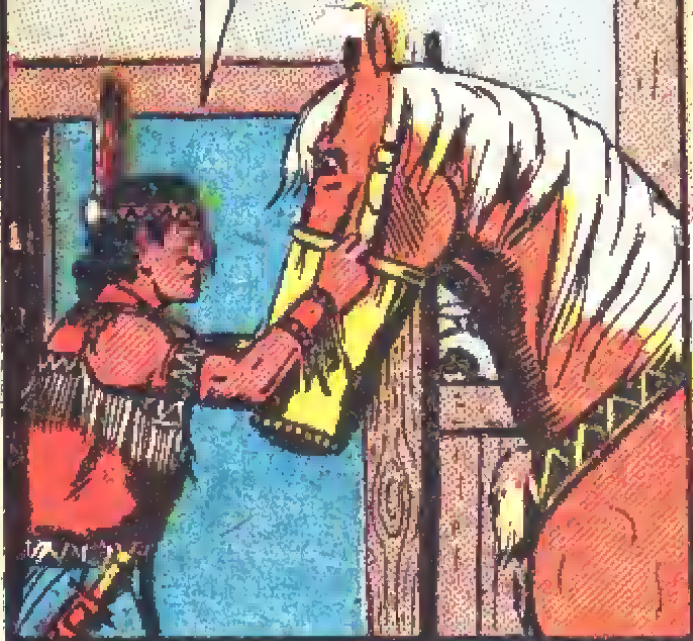
THAT NIGHT—



THIS POWDERED POISON IS ODORLESS AND TASTELESS! BY THE TIME THE COMANCHE REALIZES HIS HORSE HAS EATEN IT— IT'LL BE TOO LATE TO SAVE HIM!

THAT EVENING AS STRAIGHT ARROW BRINGS FURY INTO THE LIVERY STABLE —

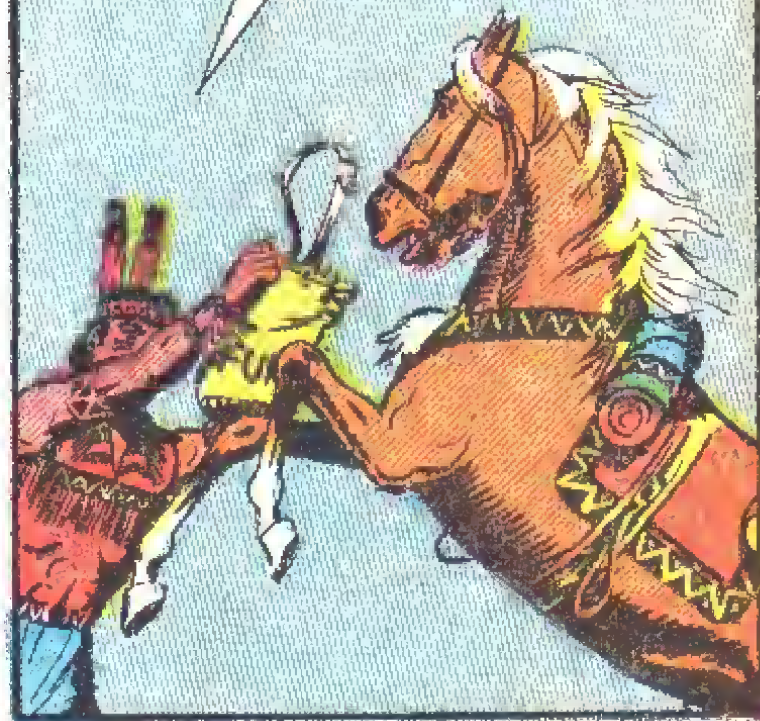
EAT WELL, MY GOLDEN ONE! YOU'LL NEED YOUR STRENGTH TO FIND THE MAN WHO HATES YOU!



FURY — NO! WAIT!



IN THE DIRT AND SAWDUST ON THE FLOOR — THE K MARK I SAW IN THE BOOTPRINTS OUTSIDE THE SECRET CAVE! THE KILLER WAS HERE — PROBABLY TO POISON THE OATS!



MOMENTS LATER, FURY'S HOOFS BEAT THE DUST OF THE STREET AS HE GALLOPS EASTWARD TOWARD THE SUNDOWN MOUNTAINS...

WE'LL TAKE NO MORE CHANCES! YOU'RE GOING BACK TO THE SECRET CAVE!

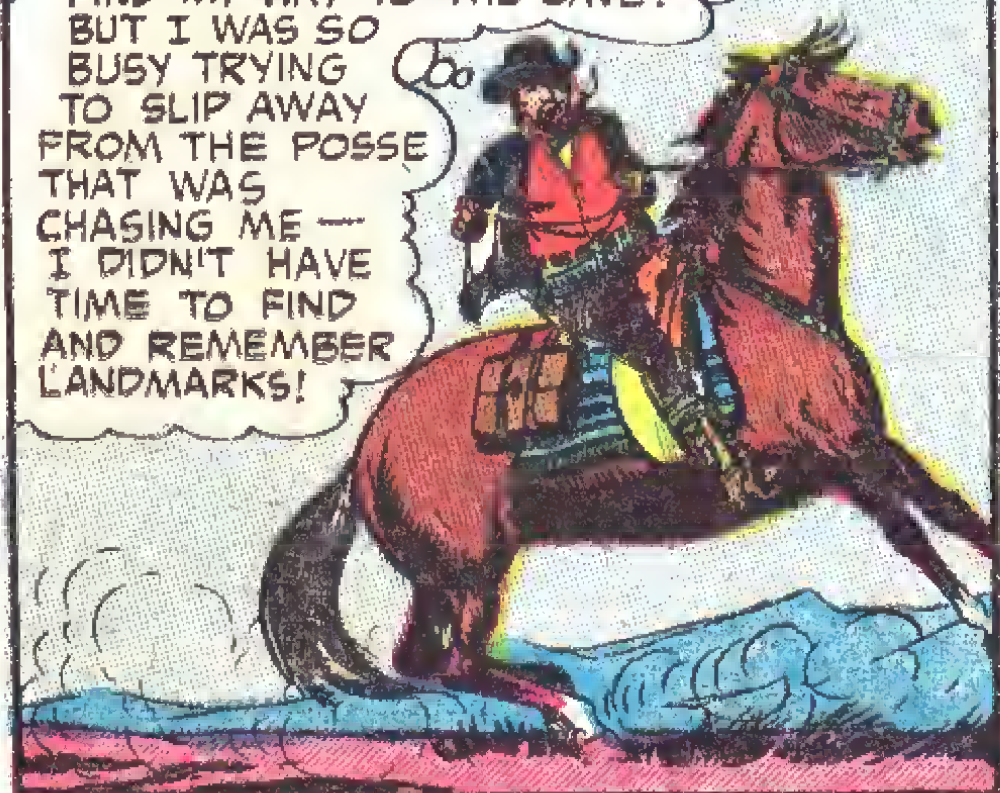


I COULDN'T HAVE PLANNED IT BETTER! THE COMANCHE WILL TAKE HIS BRONC TO THE CAVE — LEAVE HIM — AND I'LL JUST WALK IN AND GUN HIM DOWN!

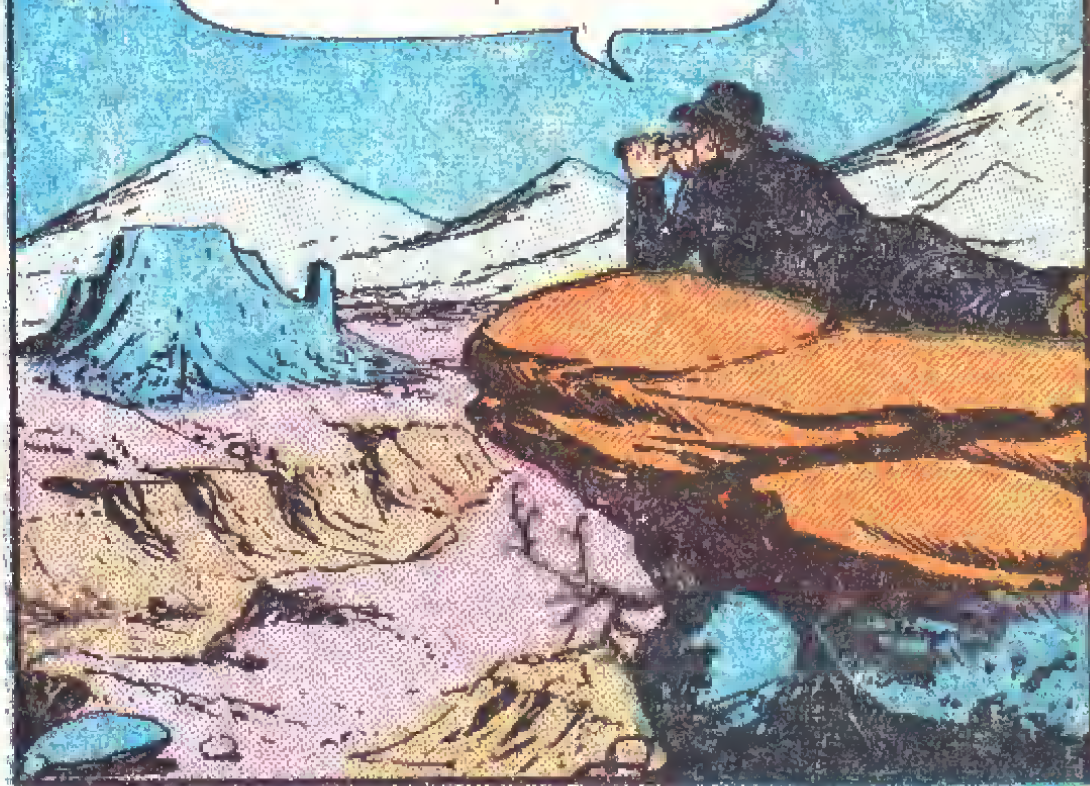


AS SUNDANCE KID RIDES INTO THE HILLS BEYOND TWIN BUTTES —

FUNNY! I'D HAVE SWORN I COULD FIND MY WAY TO THE CAVE! BUT I WAS SO BUSY TRYING TO SLIP AWAY FROM THE POSSE THAT WAS CHASING ME — I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO FIND AND REMEMBER LANDMARKS!



BUT THE COMANCHE IS SOMEWHERE AROUND HERE! ALL I GOT TO DO IS KEEP AN EYE PEELED FOR HIM, AND HE'LL SHOW ME WHERE THE CAVE IS, HIMSELF!



EVEN AS THE SUNDANCE KID PEERS THROUGH THE HEAT HAZE THAT OVERLIES THE SUNDOWN COUNTRY, STRAIGHT ARROW BRINGS FURY TOWARD THE CAVE...

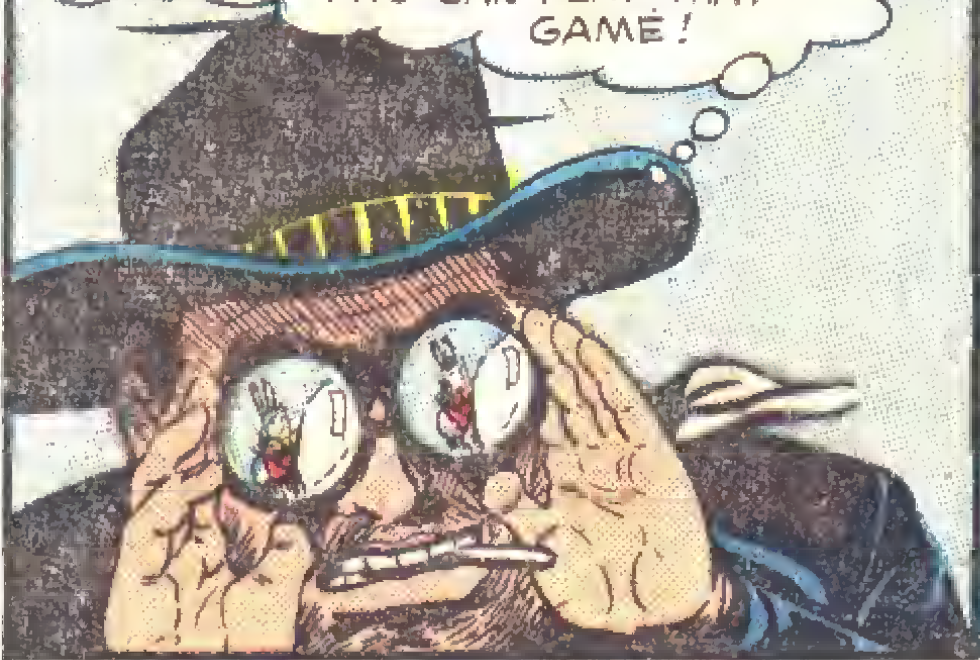


I'LL BE OUTSIDE, TO GUARD YOU. NO HARM CAN COME, FOR IF THIS BANK-ROBBER AND KILLER COMES AFTER YOU, MY ARROW WILL SEEK HIM OUT!

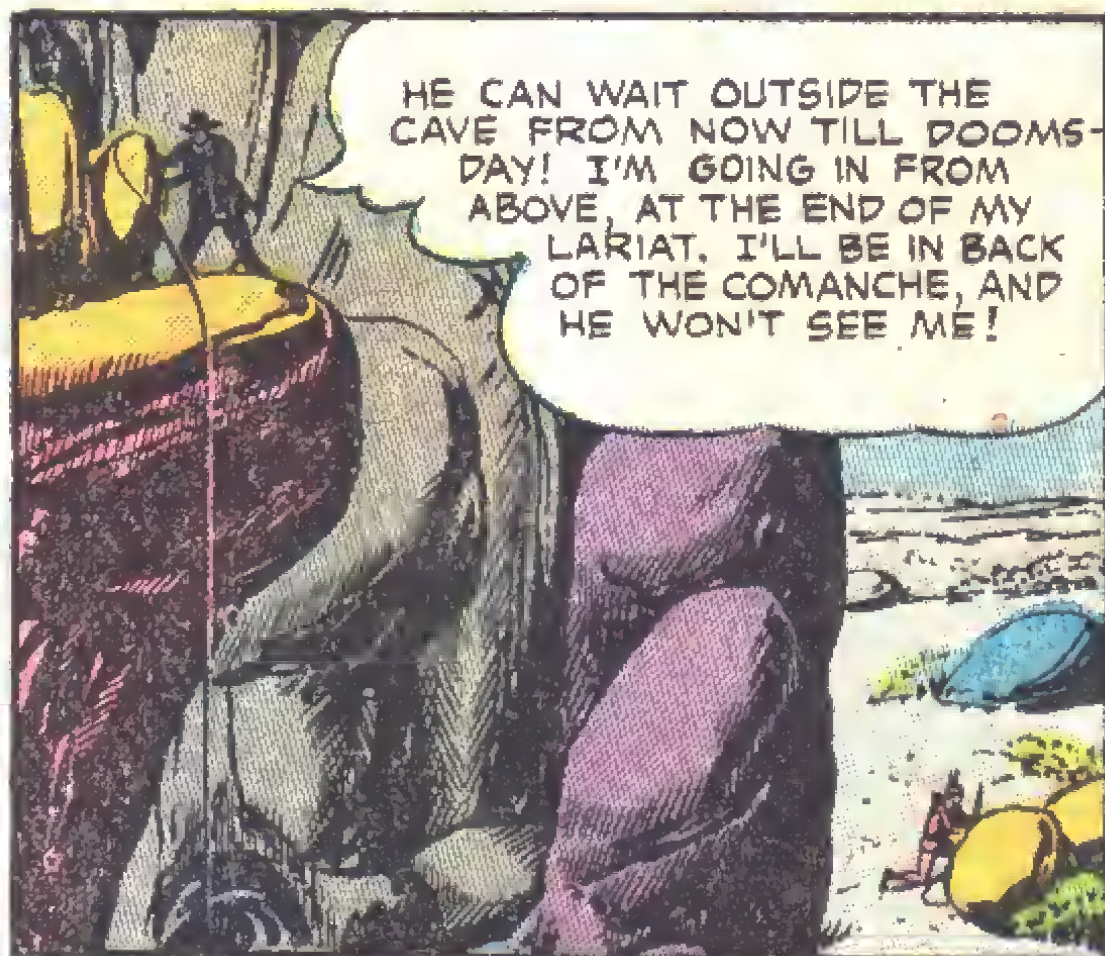


ON THE ROCKY HEIGHTS ABOVE THE CAVE MOUTH...

SO! THE COMANCHE TOOK THE PALOMINO INTO THE CAVE AND NOW HE HIDES HIMSELF BEHIND THOSE TUFA FORMATIONS! WELL—TWO CAN PLAY THAT GAME!



HE CAN WAIT OUTSIDE THE CAVE FROM NOW TILL DOOMSDAY! I'M GOING IN FROM ABOVE, AT THE END OF MY LARIAT. I'LL BE IN BACK OF THE COMANCHE, AND HE WON'T SEE ME!



THIS PART OF THE ROCK HIDES ME FROM HIM. EVEN IF HE WAS LOOKING THIS WAY, HE COULDN'T SEE ME OR MY ROPE!

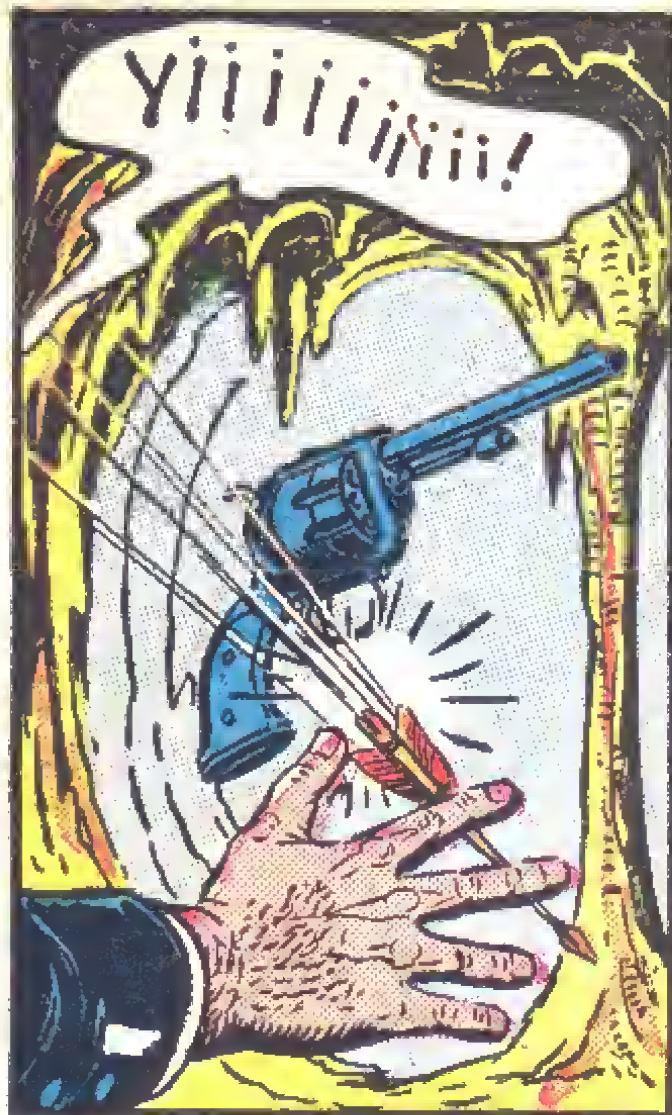


IN A MINUTE I'LL BE ABLE TO WALK OUT OF HERE WITHOUT ANYBODY BEING ABLE TO ACCUSE ME OF ROBBERY AND MURDER—NOT EVEN A HORSE!



GO AHEAD—WHINNY! AFTER I KILL YOU, I'LL KILL THE COMANCHE—AS HE COMES RACING IN TO FIND OUT WHAT'S HAPPENED!

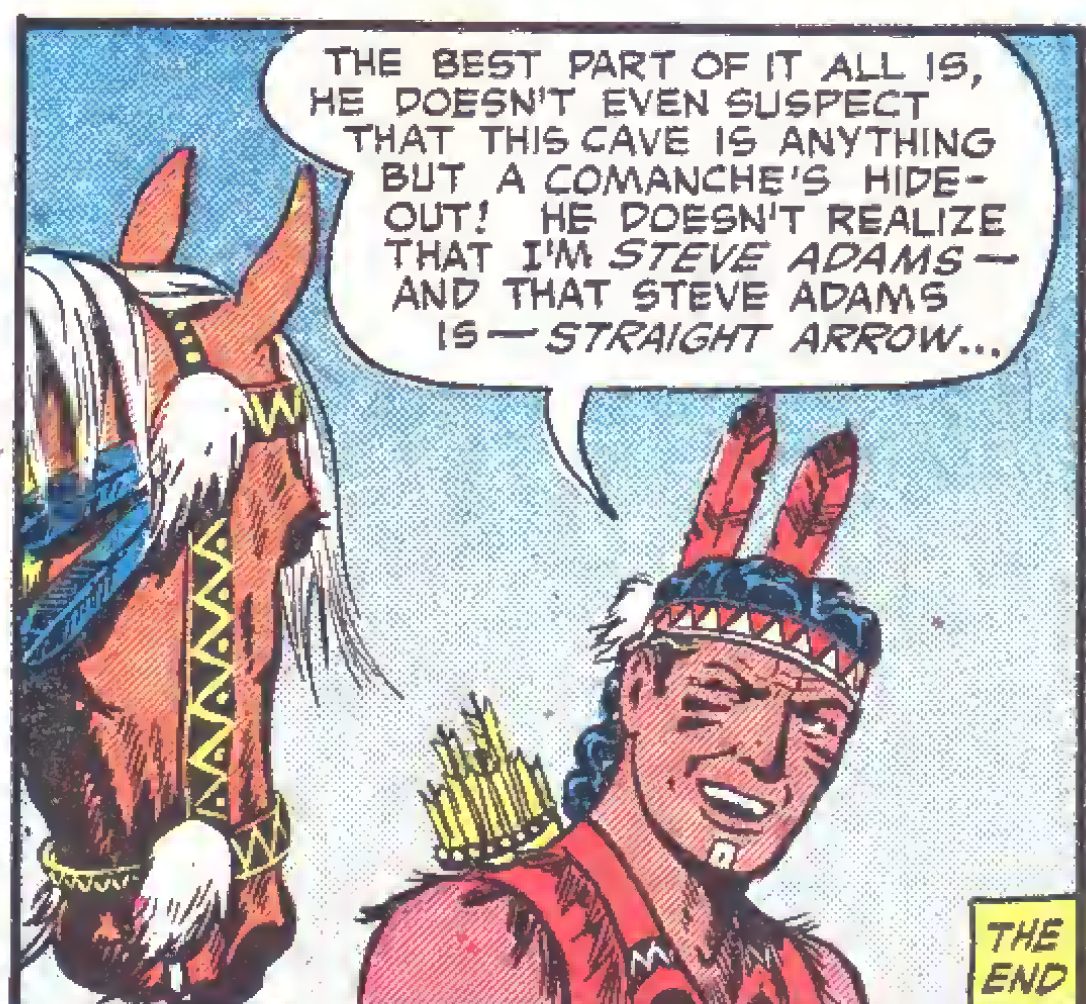
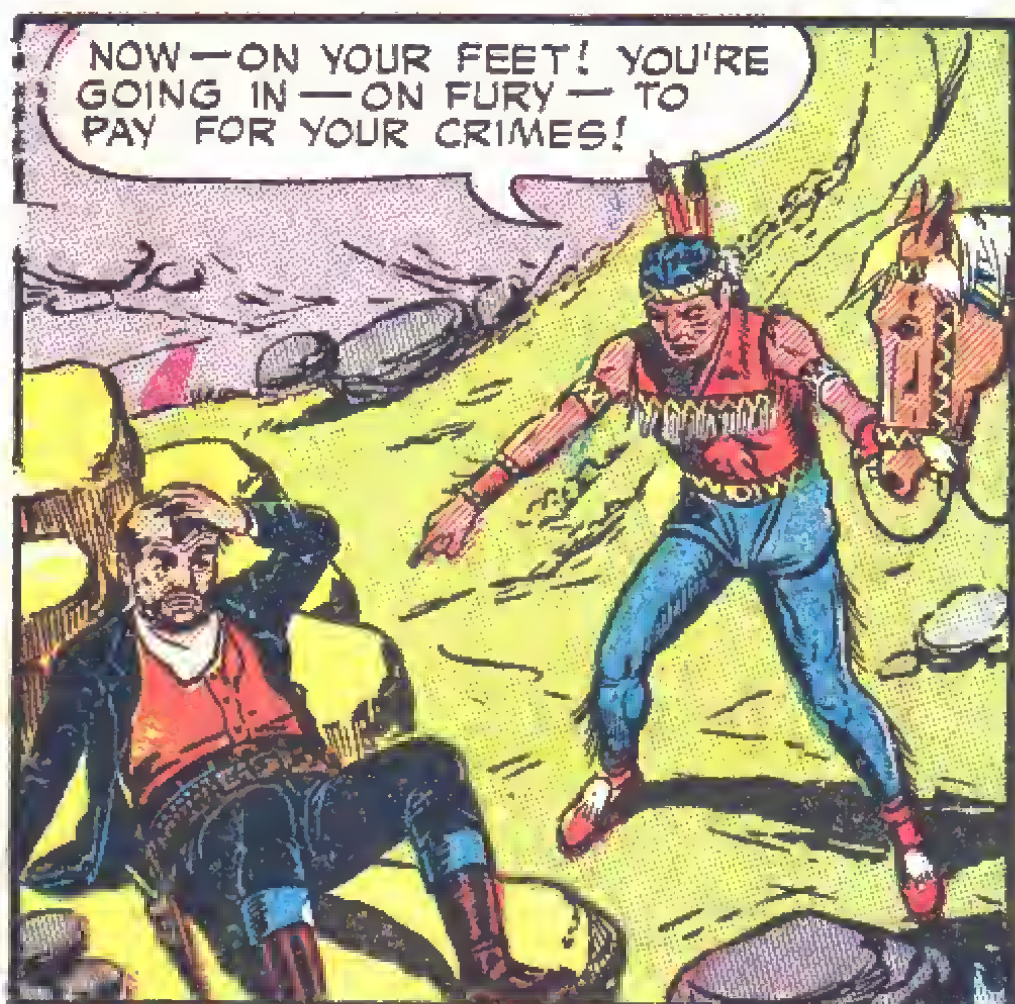
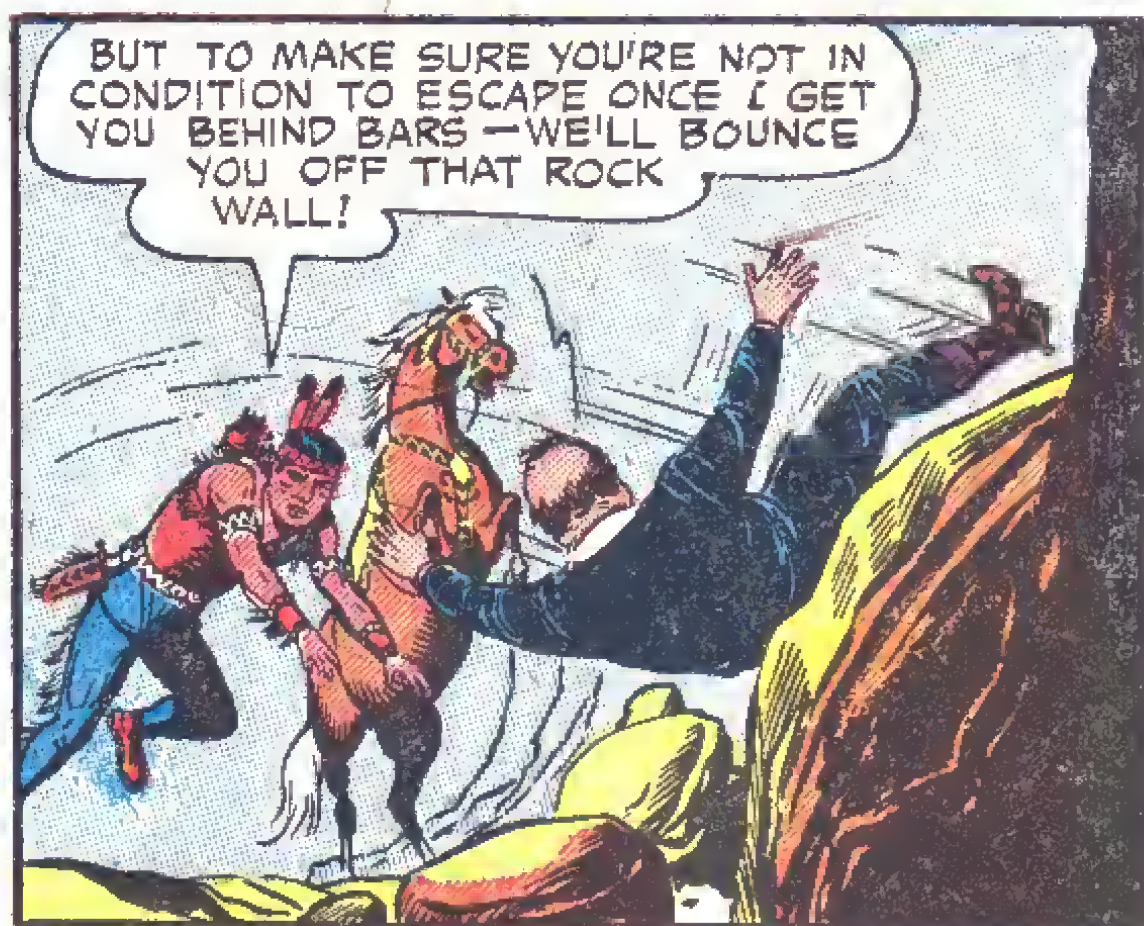




YOU FOOL! DID YOU THINK I'D LEAVE FURY UNPROTECTED? WHILE I COULDN'T SEE **YOU** AS YOU CAME DOWN THE CLIFF ON YOUR LARIAT—I COULD SEE YOUR **SHADOW** ON THE ROCKS BEYOND!

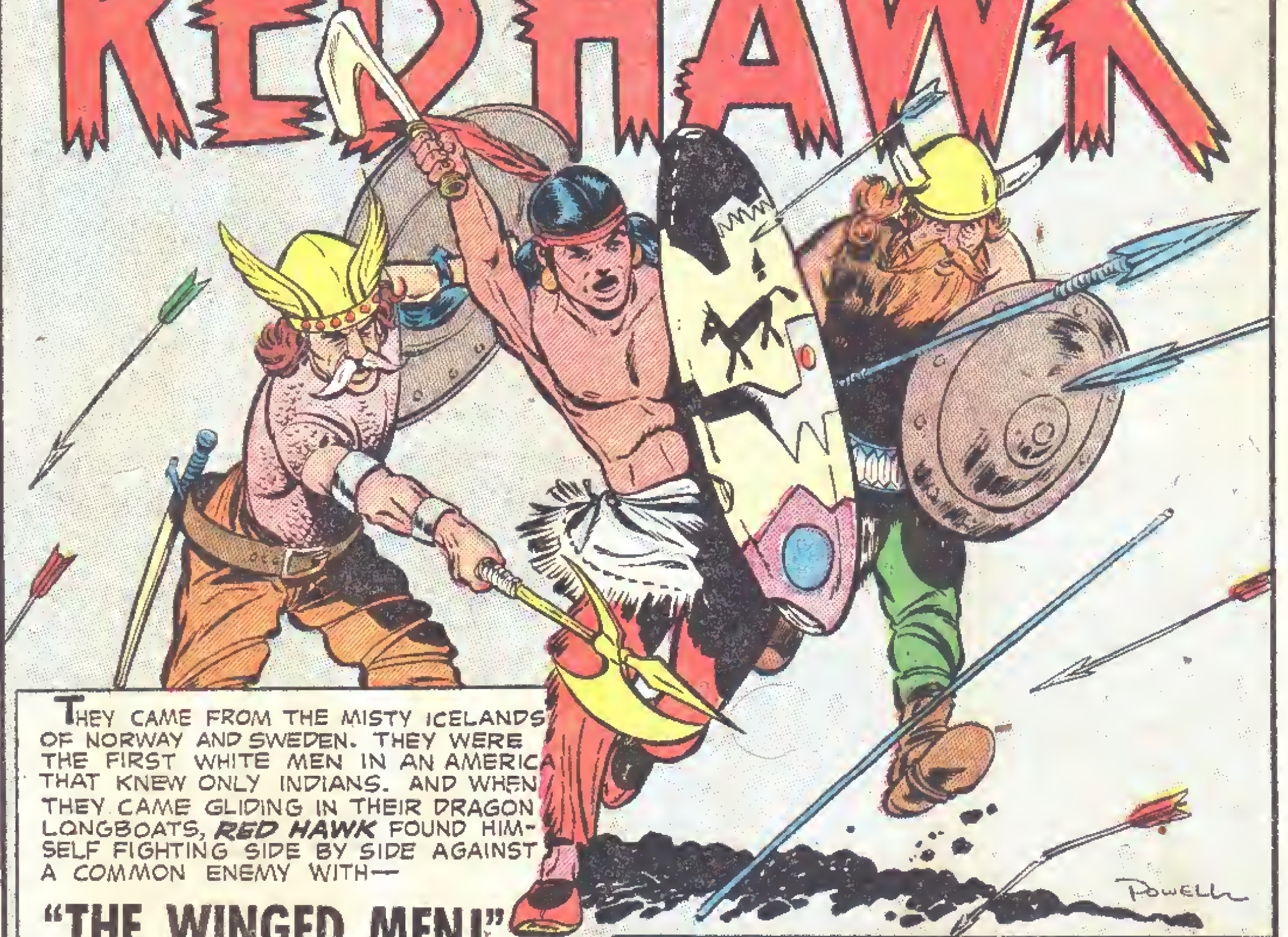


THAT WON'T HELP YOU, STRAIGHT ARROW! I GOT YOU AND YOUR BRONC WHERE I WANT YOU! YOU'RE **BOTH** GOING TO DIE!



THE END

RED HAWK



THEY CAME FROM THE MISTY ICELANDS OF NORWAY AND SWEDEN. THEY WERE THE FIRST WHITE MEN IN AN AMERICA THAT KNEW ONLY INDIANS. AND WHEN THEY CAME GLIDING IN THEIR DRAGON LONGBOATS, **RED HAWK** FOUND HIMSELF FIGHTING SIDE BY SIDE AGAINST A COMMON ENEMY WITH—

"THE WINGED MEN!"

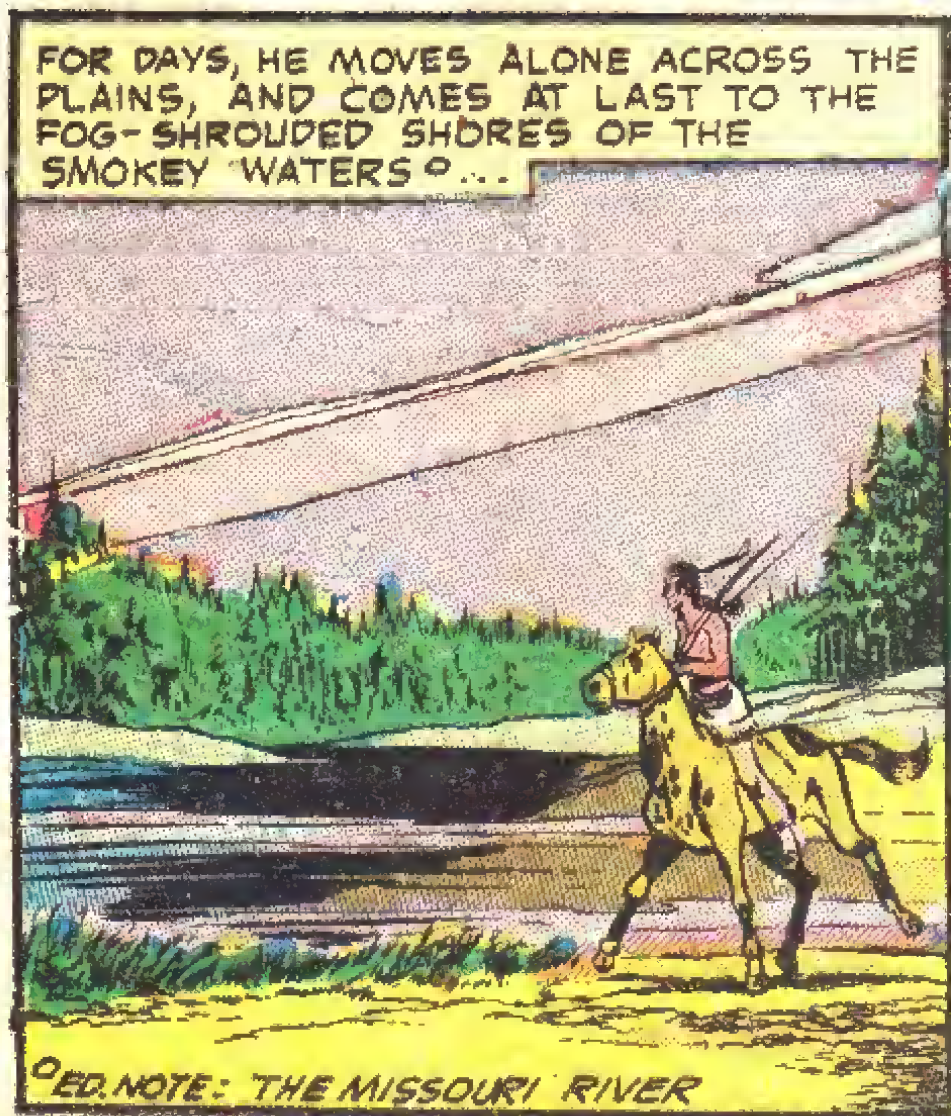
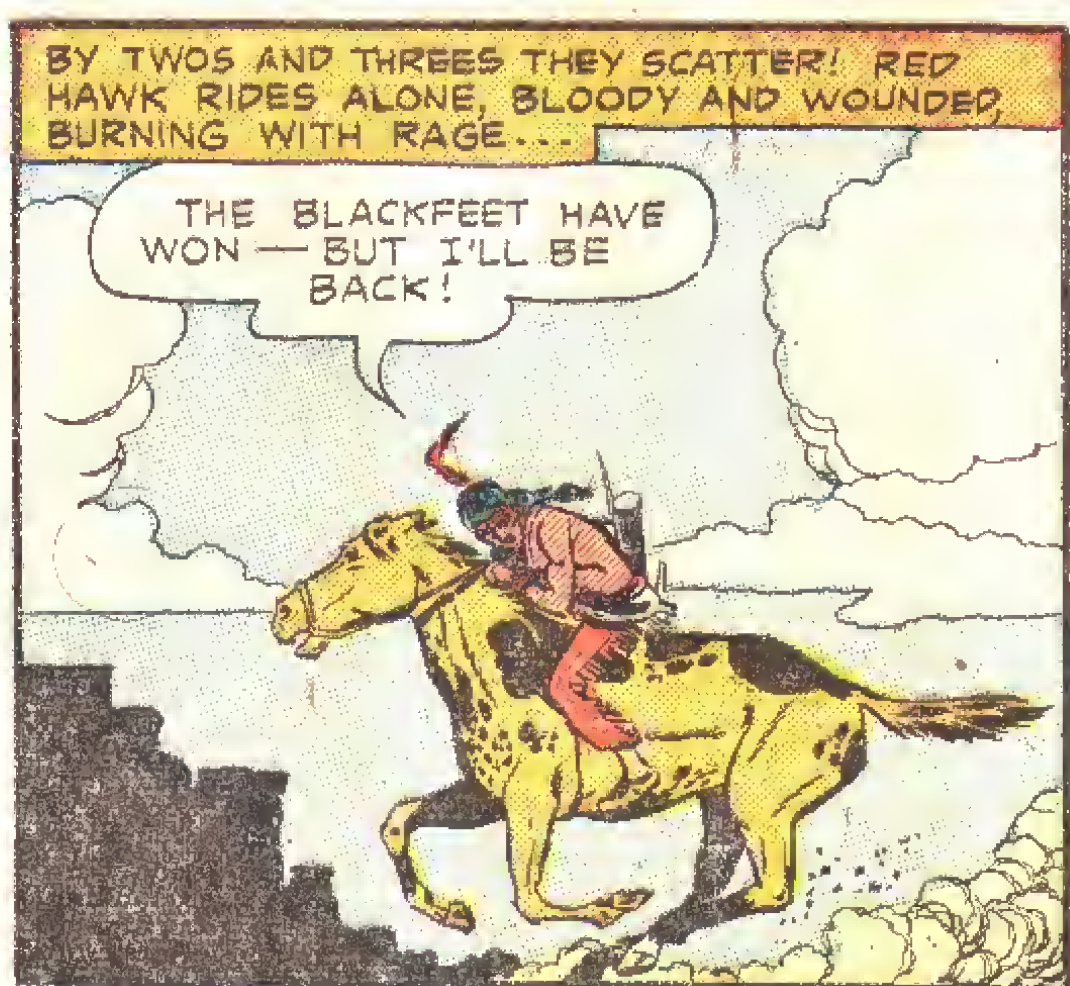
TOMAHAWKS LIFT AND FALL REDLY AS THE STRANGELY CLAD BLACKFEET DRAG THEIR VICTIMS FROM DEEP SLUMBER...

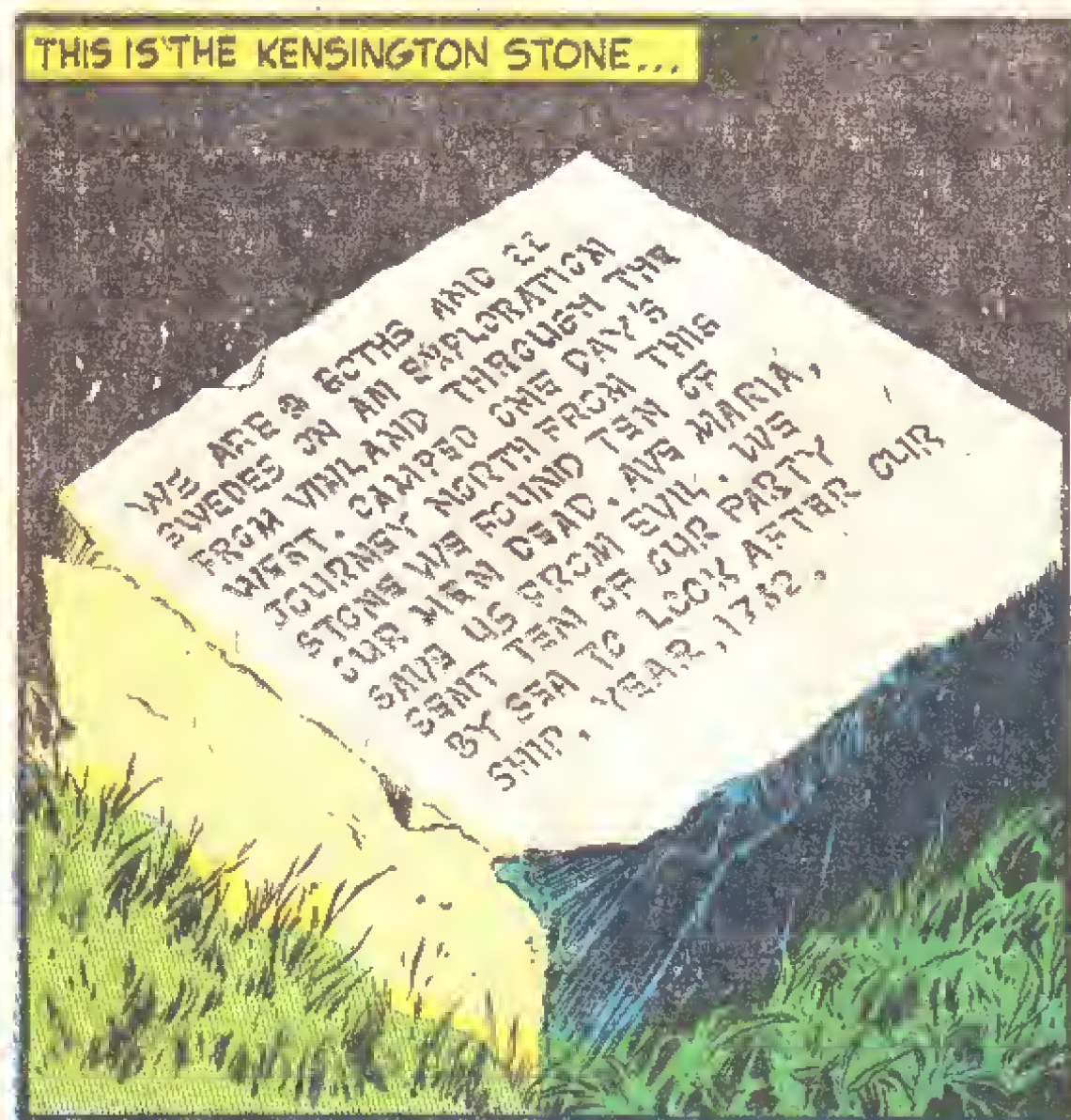
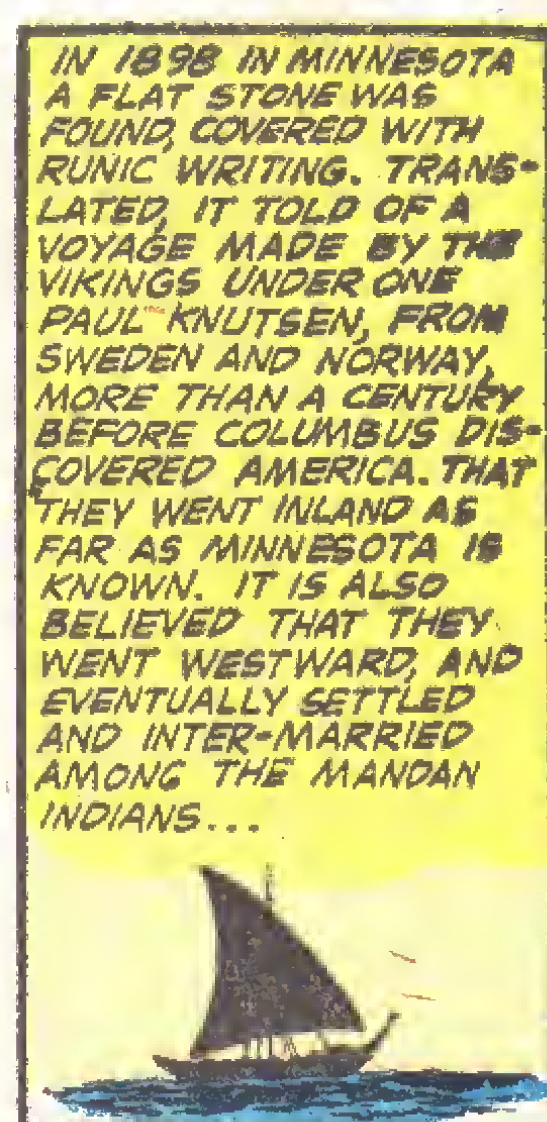
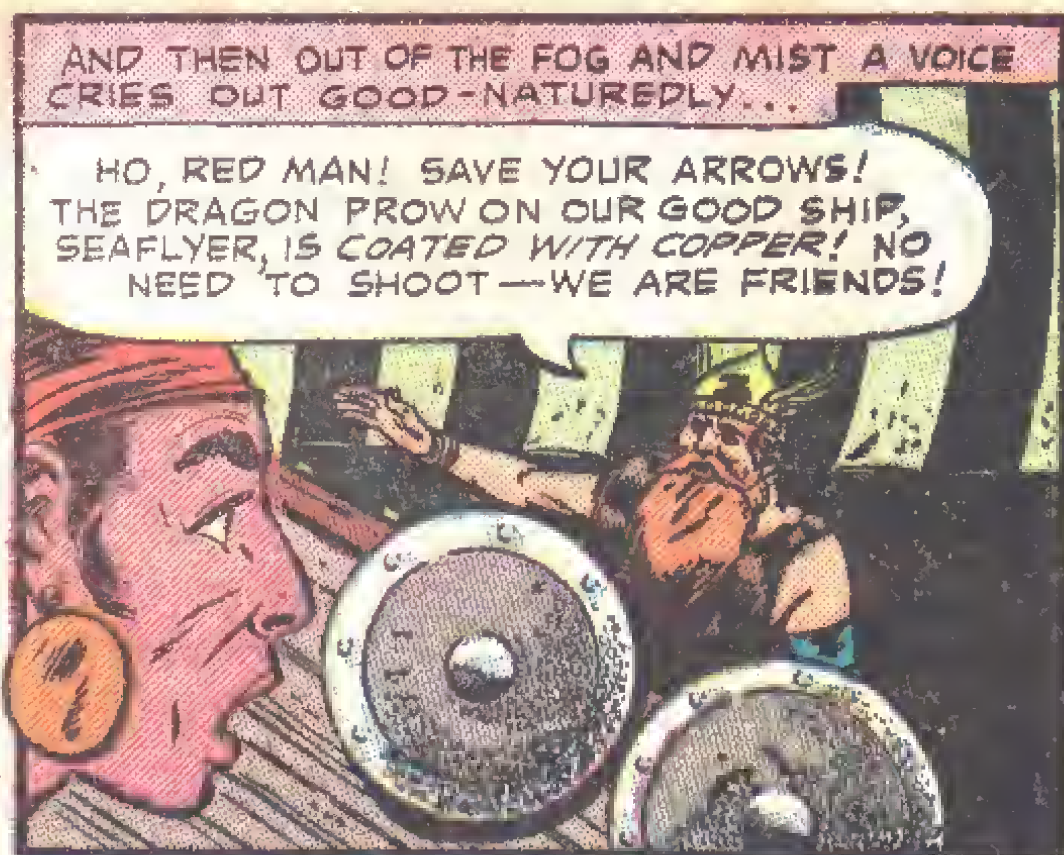
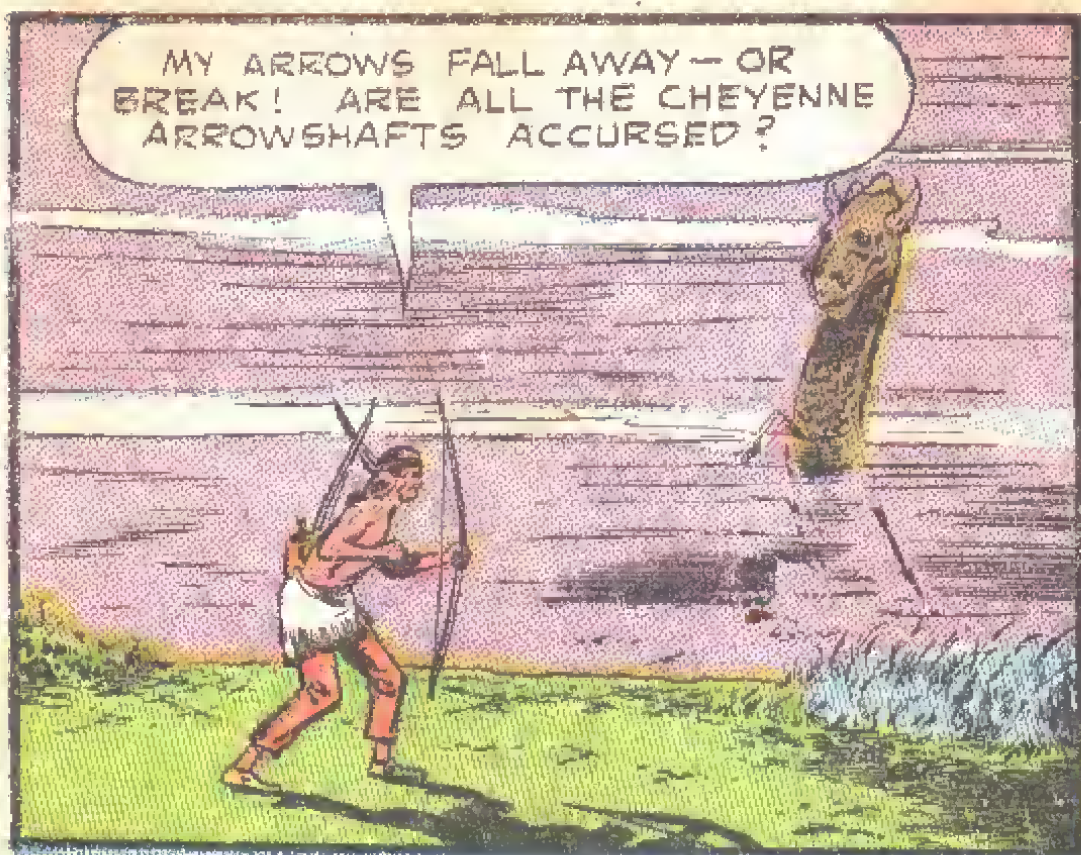
EARLY DAWN OVER A PEACEFUL GROUP OF CHEYENNE TEPEES IS SHATTERED BY THE DREAD BLACKFOOT WARWHOO!

AAAA-HAAA!!!-YYYYAA!

DIE, OLD ONE!

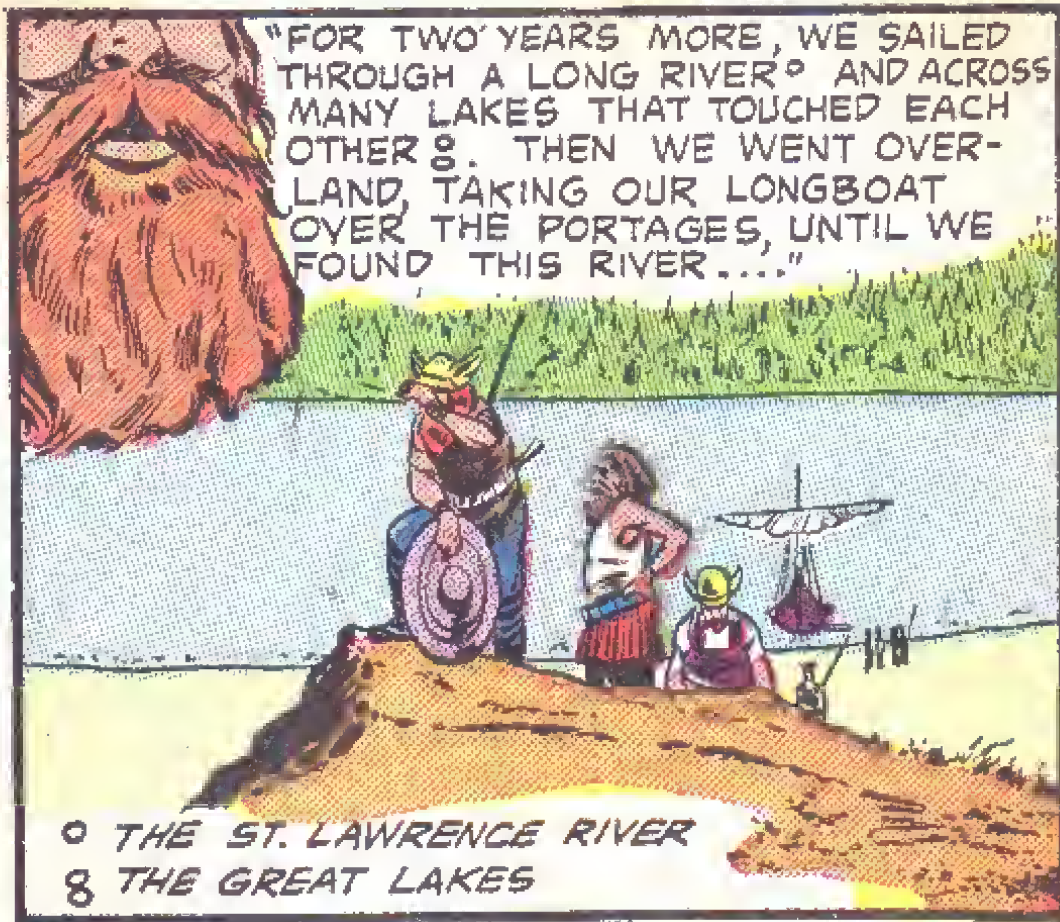








"FOR THREE YEARS WE HUNTED FOR THAT LOST COLONY! THEN ON WE SAILED TO VINLAND TO SPEND TWO MORE YEARS THERE..."



"FOR TWO YEARS MORE, WE SAILED THROUGH A LONG RIVER AND ACROSS MANY LAKES THAT TOUCHED EACH OTHER. THEN WE WENT OVERLAND, TAKING OUR LONGBOAT OVER THE PORTAGES, UNTIL WE FOUND THIS RIVER..."

o THE ST. LAWRENCE RIVER
8 THE GREAT LAKES

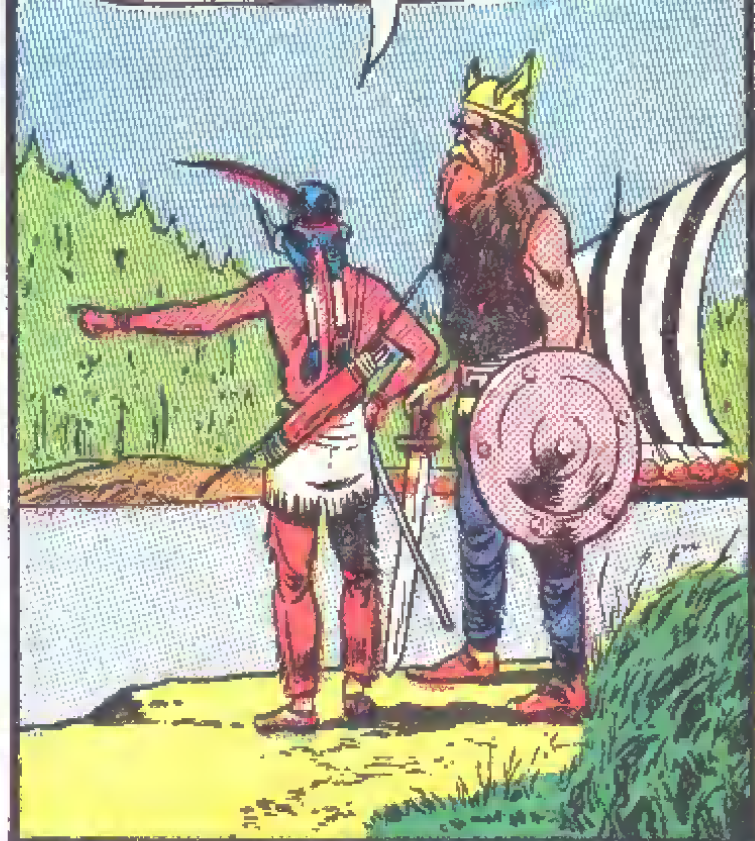
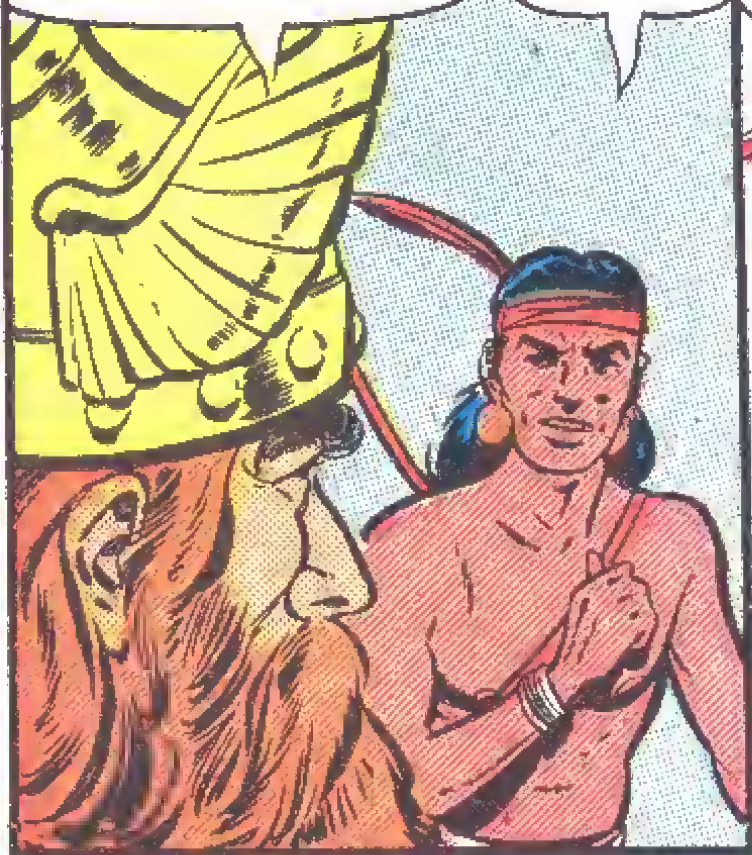
WE ARE THE TEN MEN MENTIONED ON THE KENSINGTON STONE, WHO WERE LEFT TO TEND THE BOAT! WE SEEK TO JOIN OUR COMRADES, WHO WENT WITHOUT US! BUT SIGH IT IS SUCH A LARGE COUNTRY!

I WILL GUIDE YOU NORTH!

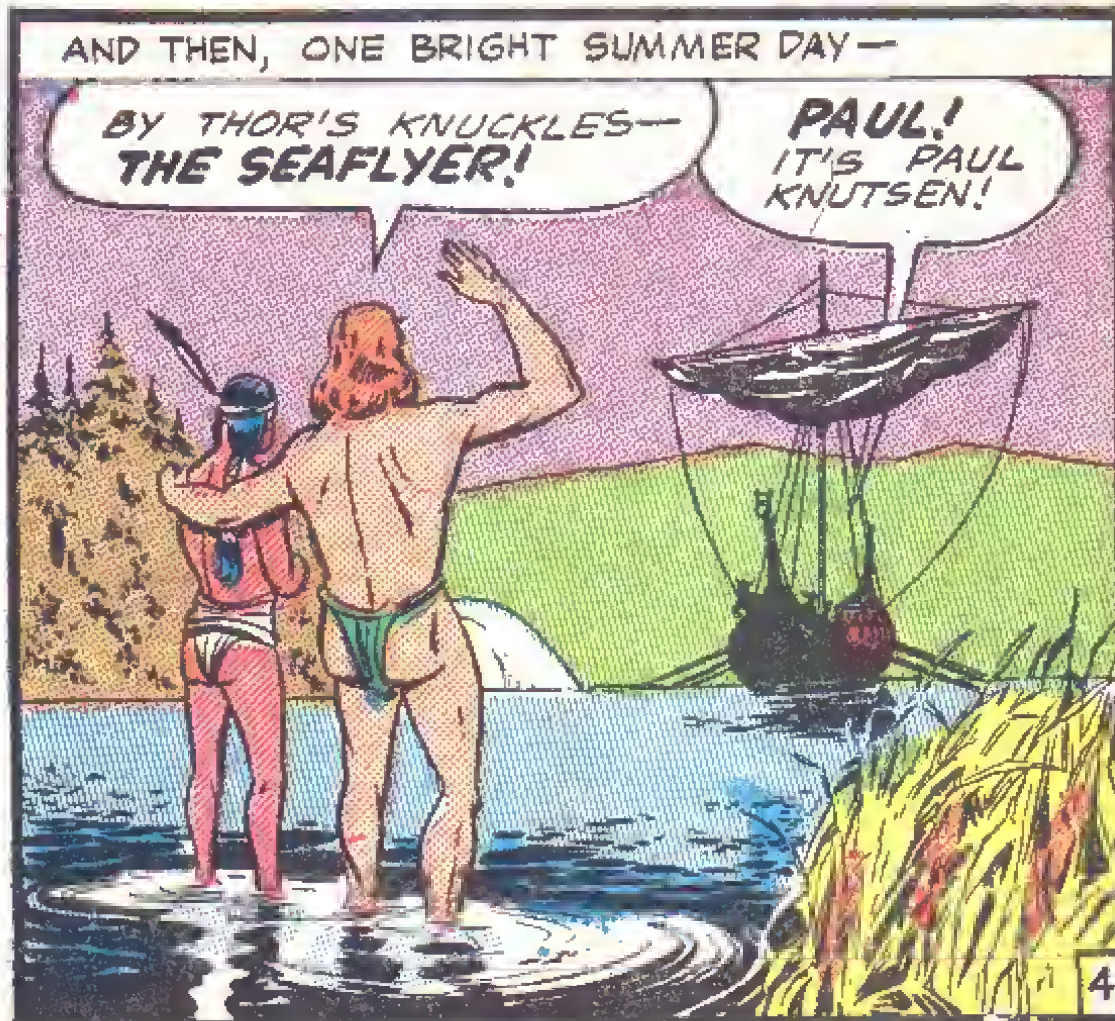
WORD HAS OFTEN COME TO THE PLAINS INDIANS OF STRANGE MEN WITH WINGS ON THEIR HEADS WHO CAME TO DWELL AMONG THE MANDANS! THOSE WINGED HEADS MUST BE YOUR WINGED HELMETS! THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE WITH THE MANDANS MAY BE YOUR LOST COMRADES!

FOR MANY DAYS, THE LONGBOAT BEATS NORTH ALONG THE BANKS OF THE SMOKEY WATERS...

THE RIVER FORKS HERE, WITH A STRONG CURRENT. TELL YOUR HELMSMAN TO BE CAREFUL!



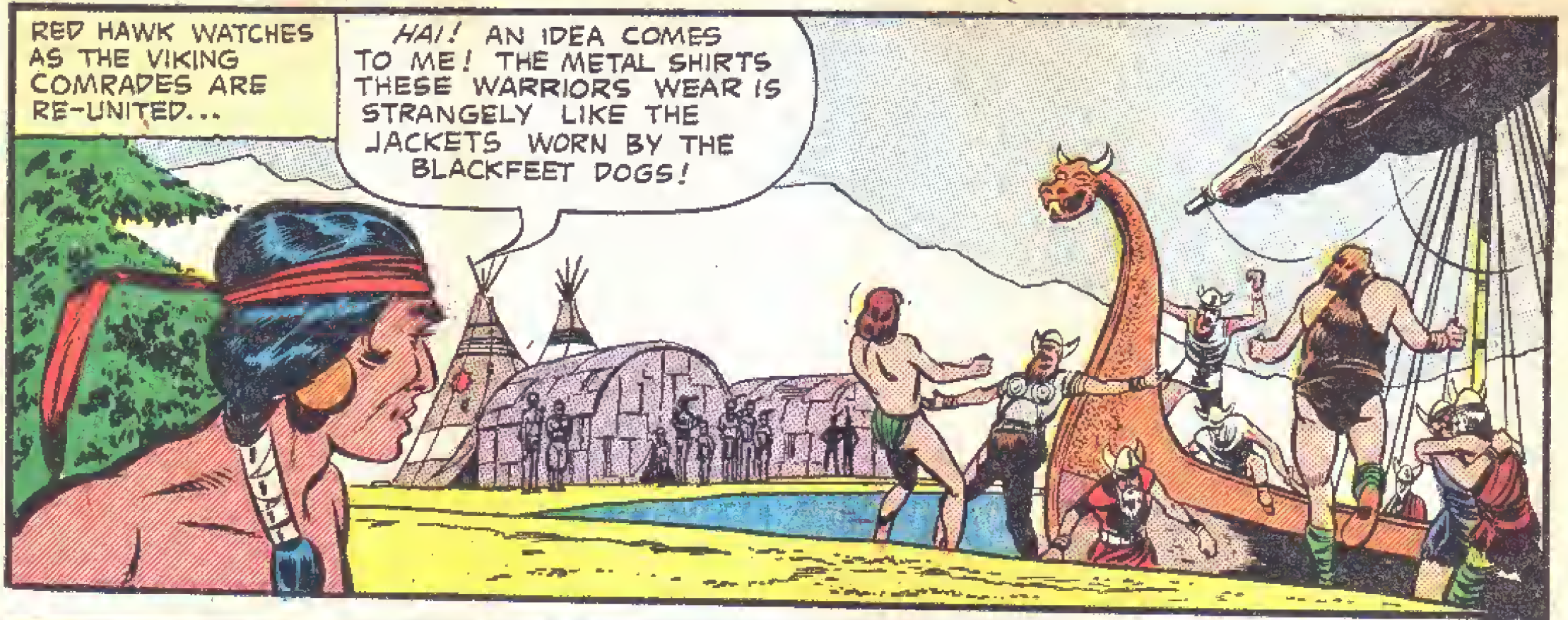
RED HAWK'S ARROWS BRING DOWN FOWL AND GAME, AND THE VIKINGS FEAST WELL.



AND THEN, ONE BRIGHT SUMMER DAY—

BY THOR'S KNUCKLES—
THE SEAFLYER!

PAUL!
IT'S PAUL
KNUTSEN!



RED HAWK WATCHES AS THE VIKING COMRADES ARE RE-UNITED...

HAI! AN IDEA COMES TO ME! THE METAL SHIRTS THESE WARRIORS WEAR IS STRANGELY LIKE THE JACKETS WORN BY THE BLACKFEET DOGS!



LATER—

YOU HAVE BEEN A GOOD FRIEND, RED HAWK! IS THERE ANYTHING WE CAN DO TO PRO—OUR FRIENDSHIP?

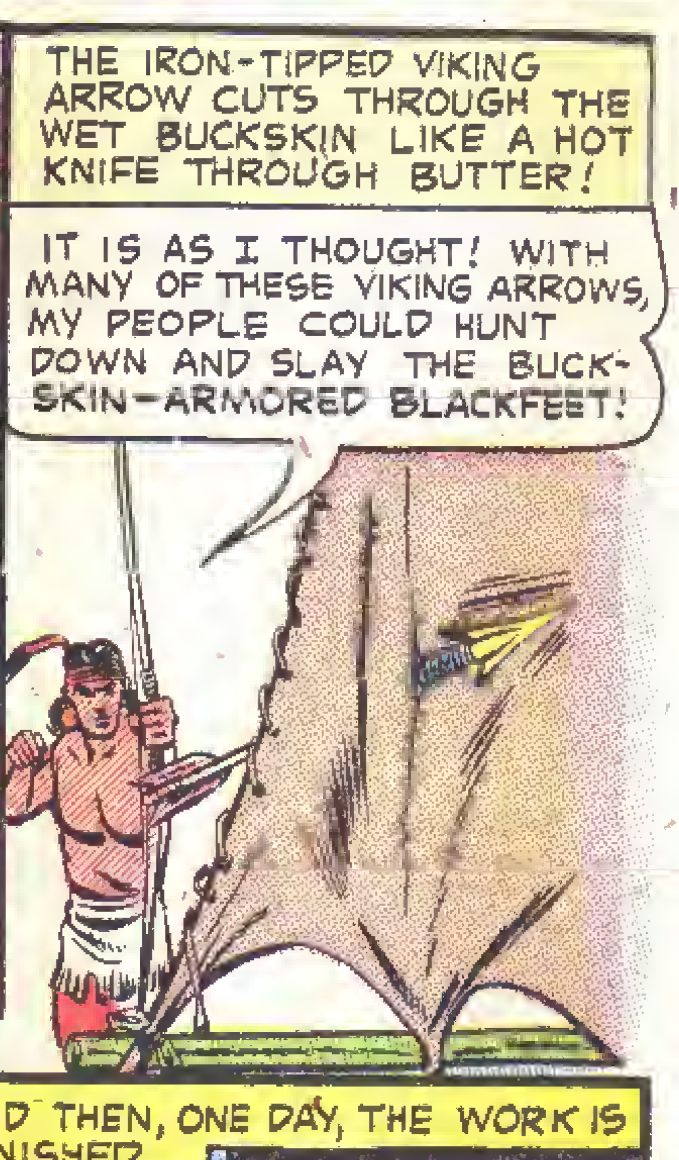
LEND ME ONE OF YOUR ARROWS!



THE VIKINGS LOOK AT ONE ANOTHER CURIOUSLY AS RED HAWK WETS AND HANGS A BUCKSKIN HIDE TO A POLE...

WHAT DOES HE MEAN TO DO?

HE IS PUTTING AN ARROW—OUR ARROW—TO HIS BOW!



THE IRON-TIPPED VIKING ARROW CUTS THROUGH THE WET BUCKSKIN LIKE A HOT KNIFE THROUGH BUTTER!

IT IS AS I THOUGHT! WITH MANY OF THESE VIKING ARROWS, MY PEOPLE COULD HUNT DOWN AND SLAY THE BUCKSKIN-ARMORED BLACKFEET!



TEACH ME TO MAKE THESE ARROW-POINTS OF METAL—AND SPEARS THAT WILL PIERCE—EVEN A WOODEN SHIELD!

COME WITH ME! WE VIKINGS WHO SETTLED HERE AMONG THE MANDANS HAVE BUILT A FORGE!



FOR MANY DAYS RED HAWK AND HIS VIKING FRIENDS WORK ON...

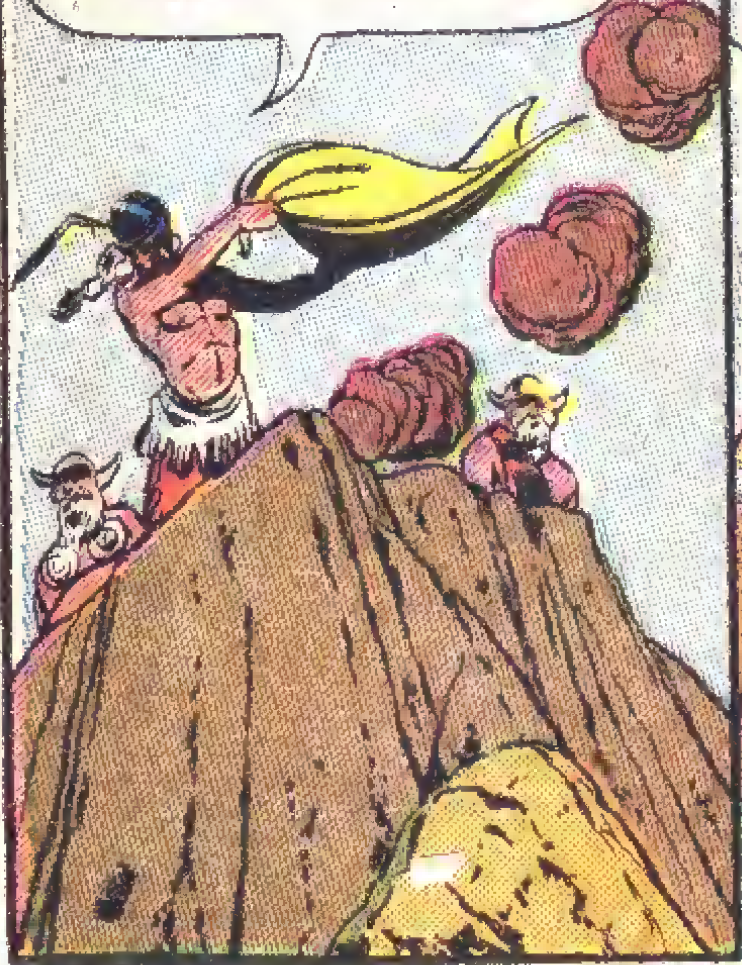
WITH MANY OF THESE FITTED TO OUR SHAFTS, THE CHEYENNE NEED NO LONGER RUN FROM THE BLACKFEET!



AND THEN, ONE DAY, THE WORK IS FINISHED...

SMOKE SIGNALS RISE INTO THE SULTRY AIR...

MY PEOPLE WILL SEE THESE PUFFS OF SMOKE, AND WILL KNOW WHERE TO MEET ME!



HOPE BEATS ONCE AGAIN IN CHEYENNE HEARTS...

RED HAWK HAS FOUND A WEAPON AGAINST THE BLACKFEET!

WE WILL DRIVE THEM FROM OUR LANDS ONCE AND FOR ALL!



SCATTERED HUNTERS MOVE DOWN OUT OF THEIR ROCKY HIDEOUTS.

IT WILL BE GOOD TO SEE RED HAWK AGAIN!

-AND EVEN BETTER TO SLAY THE BLACKFEET DOGS AS HE PROMISES!



BY TWOS AND THREES AND BY THE DOZENS, THE CHEYENNE PEOPLE GATHER. THEY EXCLAIM OVER THE ARROWPOINTS THAT RED HAWK HANDS THEM...

THIS METAL IS CALLED IRON! IT WILL GO THROUGH WET BUCKSKIN OR WOOD. WITH THIS WE SHALL SLAY THE BLACKFEET DOGS!

HA!

GOOD! GOOD!



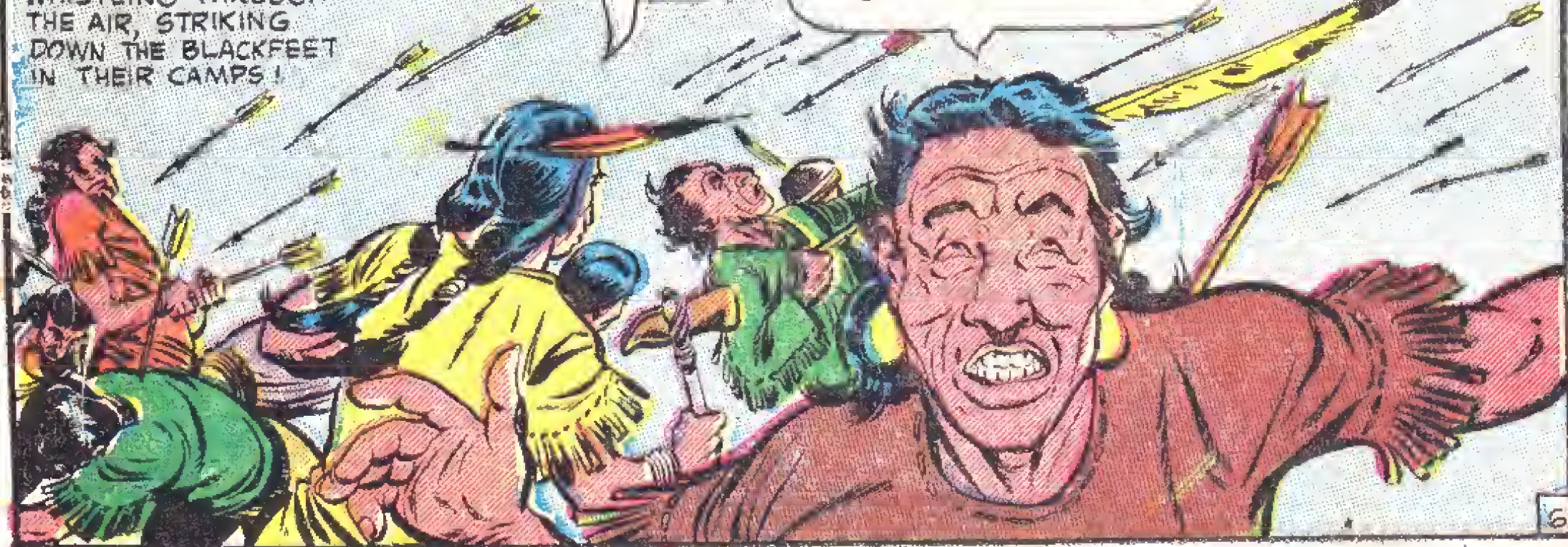
ANGER IN THEIR HEARTS, THE CHEYENNES SET OUT FOR THE LAST GREAT FIGHT WITH THEIR ENEMIES...



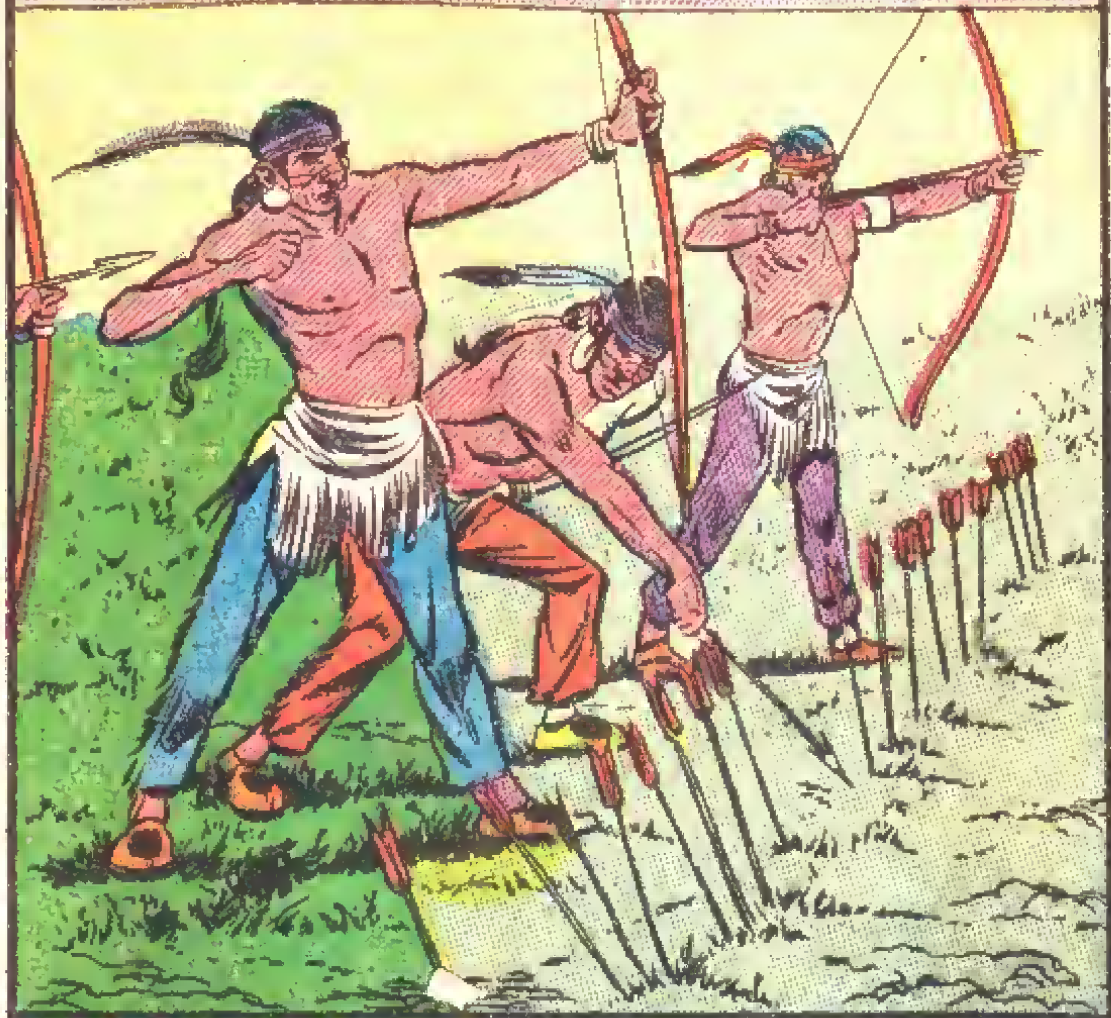
FIRST COME THE IRON-SHOED ARROWS, WHISTLING THROUGH THE AIR, STRIKING DOWN THE BLACKFEET IN THEIR CAMPS!

HU! CHEYENNE ARROWS!

AND THEY SLAY WITH THE SWIFTHNESS OF A SERPENT'S TONGUE!



CHEYENNE ARCHERS HURL DEATH THROUGH THE AIR AT THE HATED BLACKFEET —

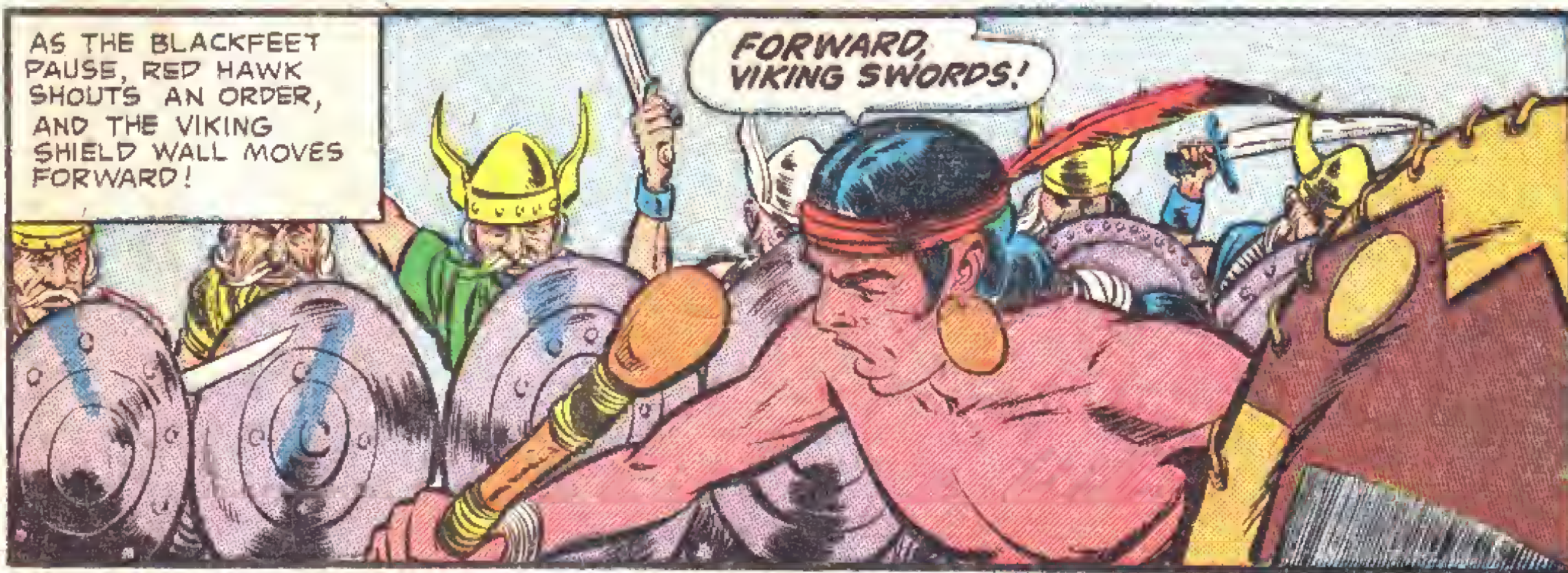


WET BUCKSKIN ARMOR IS NO PROTECTION AGAINST THESE SHAFTS THAT DIG DEEP TO DRAIN A WARRIOR'S LIFE BLOOD!

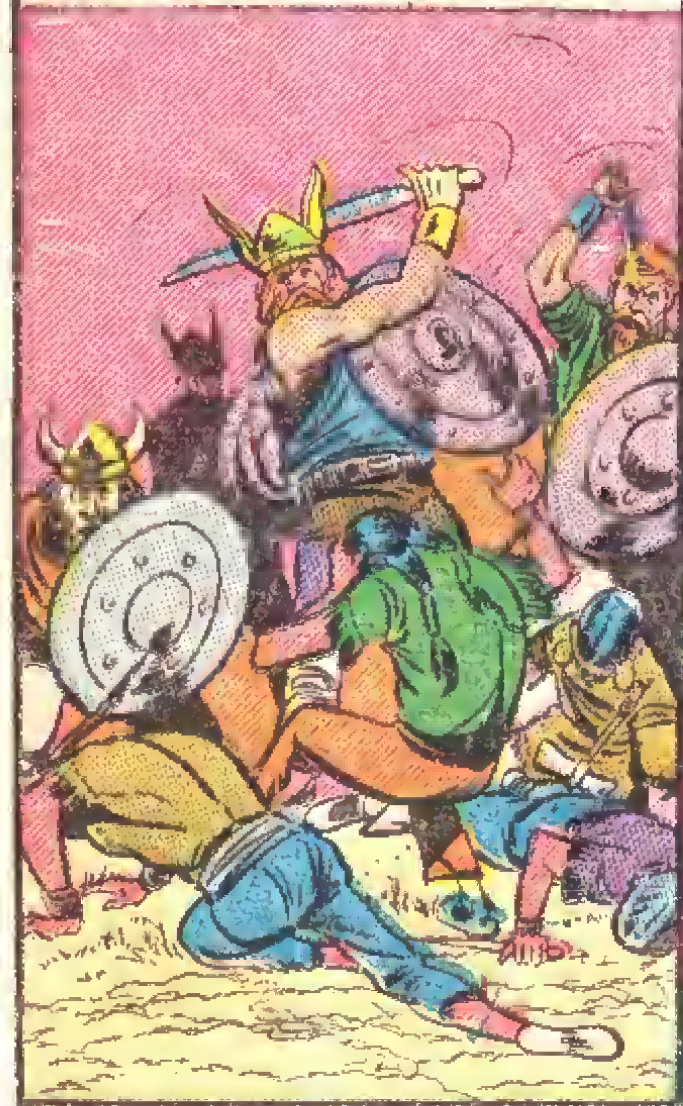


AS THE BLACKFEET PAUSE, RED HAWK SHOUTS AN ORDER, AND THE VIKING SHIELD WALL MOVES FORWARD!

FORWARD, VIKING SWORDS!



NO LIVING THING CAN STAND BEFORE THAT FURY...



FOR A FEW MINUTES, THE BLACKFEET HOLD GROUND...



AND THEN THEY BREAK AND FLEE NORTH TO THEIR OWN LANDS, AND THE PEOPLE OF THE CHEYENNE HAVE RID THEIR HUNTING GROUND OF THE OPPRESSOR...

THEY WILL NEVER RETURN! MY PEOPLE ARE FREE ONCE MORE!



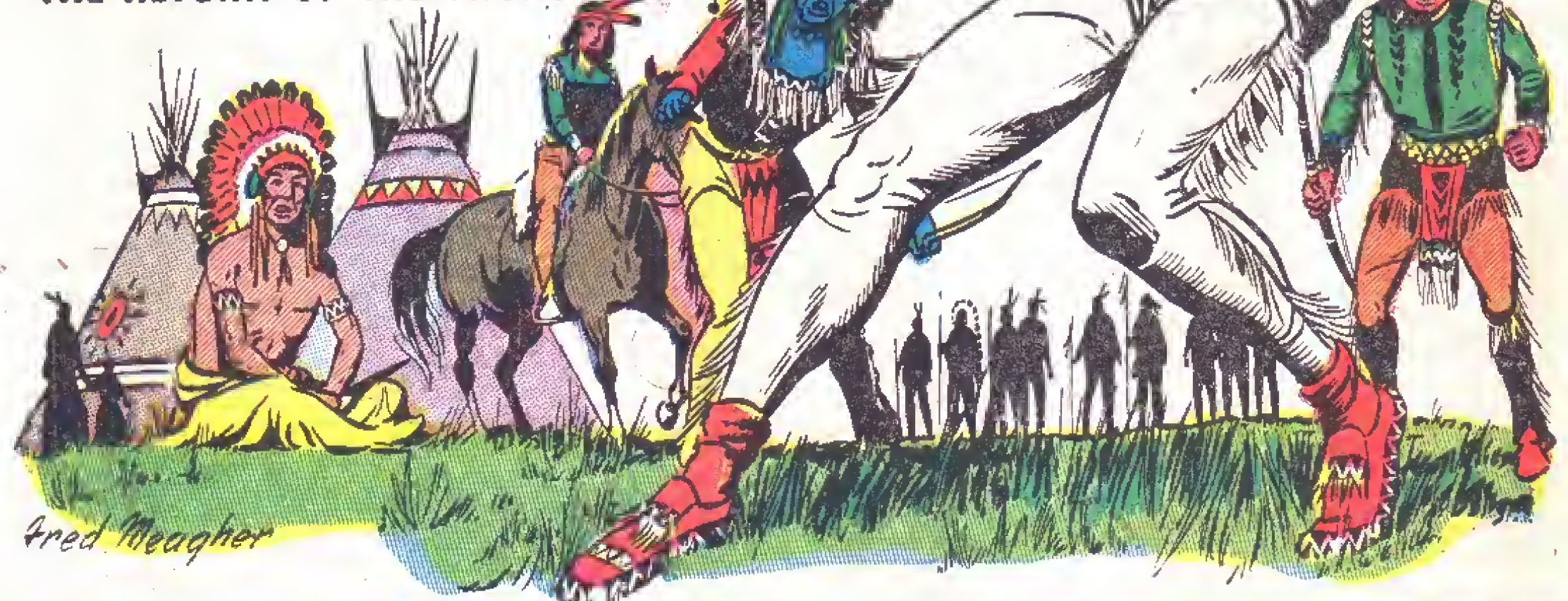
THE END

STRAIGHT ARROW

THE GREAT TRIBAL HERO OF THE COMANCHE NATION IS THE THUNDERER. OLD MEN TELL THE TALES OF HIS AMAZING DEEDS TO WILD-EYED INDIAN CHILDREN. ONLY THE THUNDERER COULD CRUSH A ROCK WITH HIS NAKED HANDS! ONLY THE THUNDERER COULD SHOOT AN ARROW TO THE MOON!

AND THEN STRAIGHT ARROW—TO SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM AN ENEMY WHO COULD BE CONQUERED IN NO OTHER WAY—UNDERTAKES TO EFFECT —

"THE RETURN OF THE THUNDERER!"

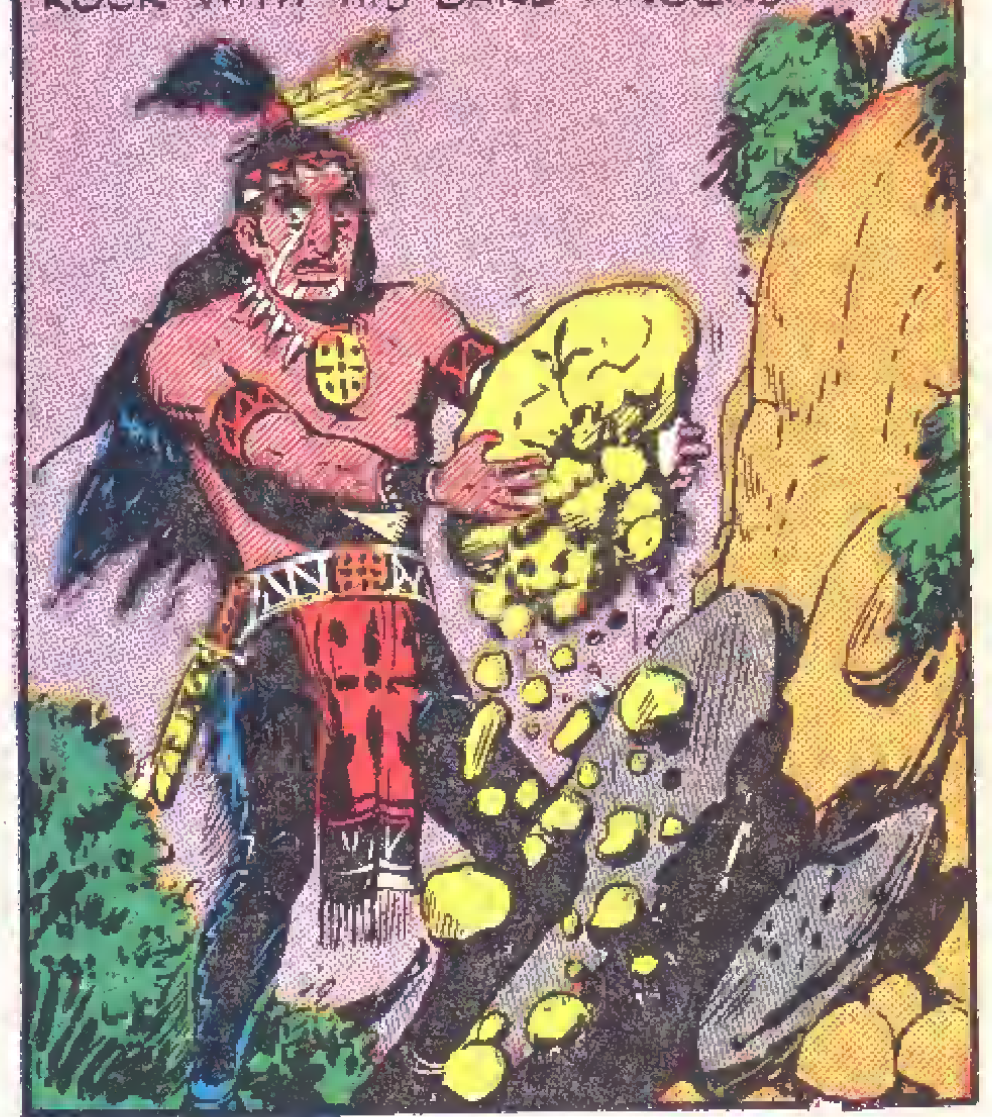


Fred Meagher

IN THE DAYS OF LONG AGO, THE THUNDERER RODE A SAVAGE GRIZZLY BEAR INTO BATTLE —

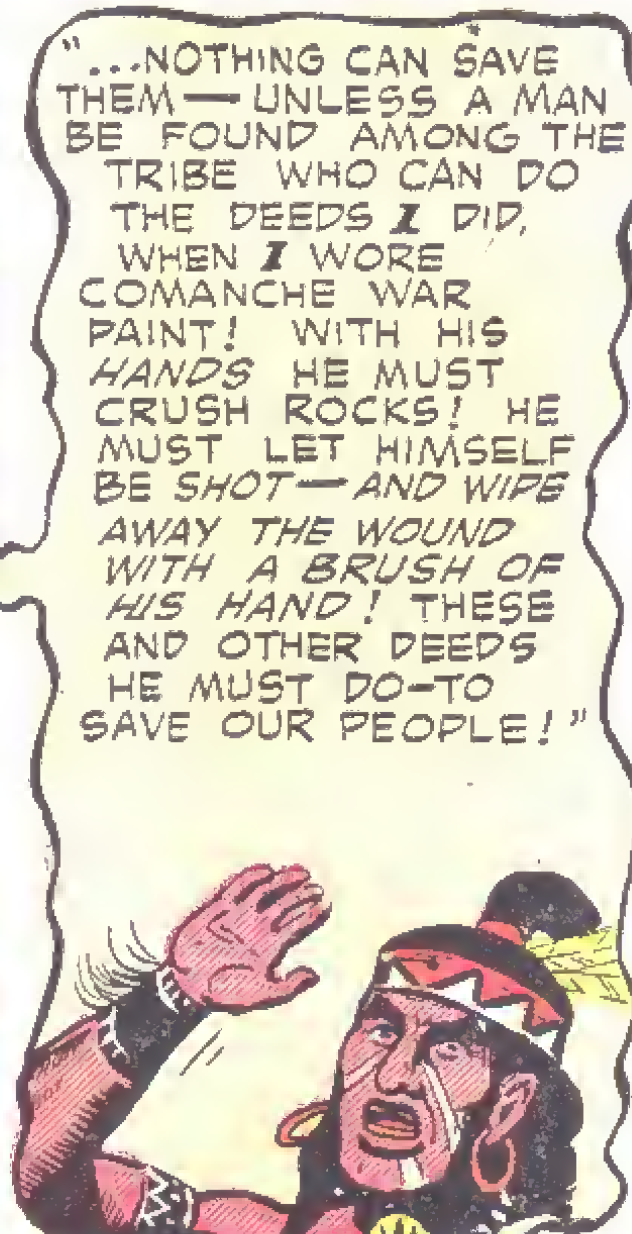


HE WAS SO STRONG, HE COULD CRUSH ROCK WITH HIS BARE FINGERS —





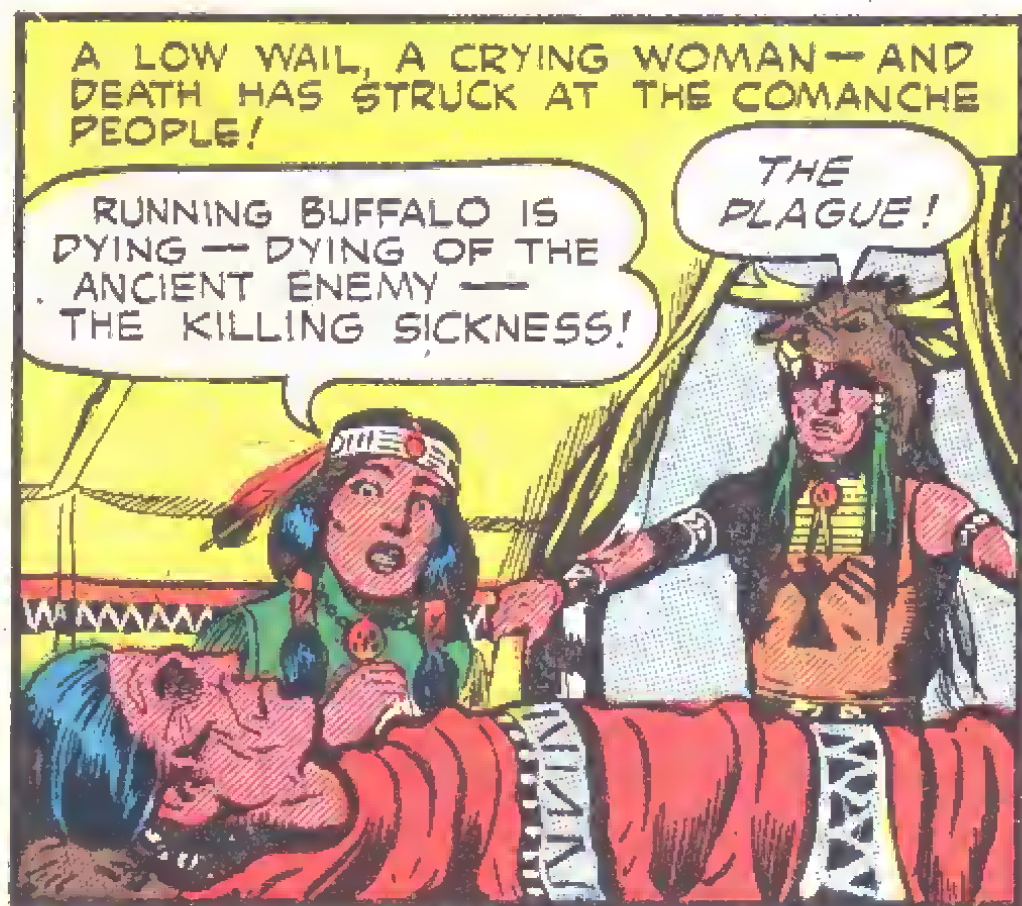
"DEATH COMES ON SWIFT FEET TO ATTACK MY PEOPLE! MANY WILL DIE!"



"...NOTHING CAN SAVE THEM—UNLESS A MAN BE FOUND AMONG THE TRIBE WHO CAN DO THE DEEDS I DID, WHEN I WORE COMANCHE WAR PAINT! WITH HIS HANDS HE MUST CRUSH ROCKS! HE MUST LET HIMSELF BE SHOT—AND WIPE AWAY THE WOUND WITH A BRUSH OF HIS HAND! THESE AND OTHER DEEDS HE MUST DO—TO SAVE OUR PEOPLE!"



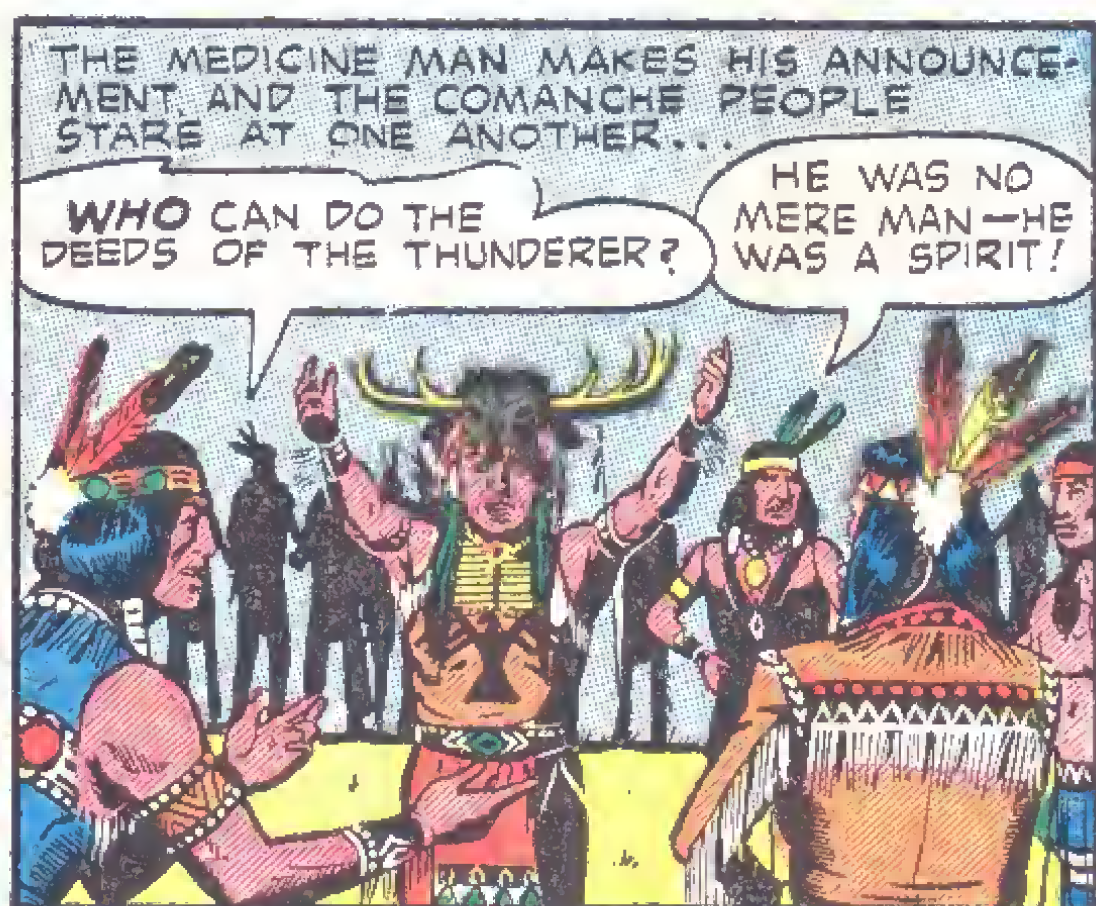
WAS IT JUST A DREAM—OR PROPHECY? HOW CAN ANY MAN PERFORM THE DEEDS THE OLD MEN SAY THE THUNDERER DID?



A LOW WAIL, A CRYING WOMAN—AND DEATH HAS STRUCK AT THE COMANCHE PEOPLE!

RUNNING BUFFALO IS DYING—DYING OF THE ANCIENT ENEMY—THE KILLING SICKNESS!

THE PLAGUE!



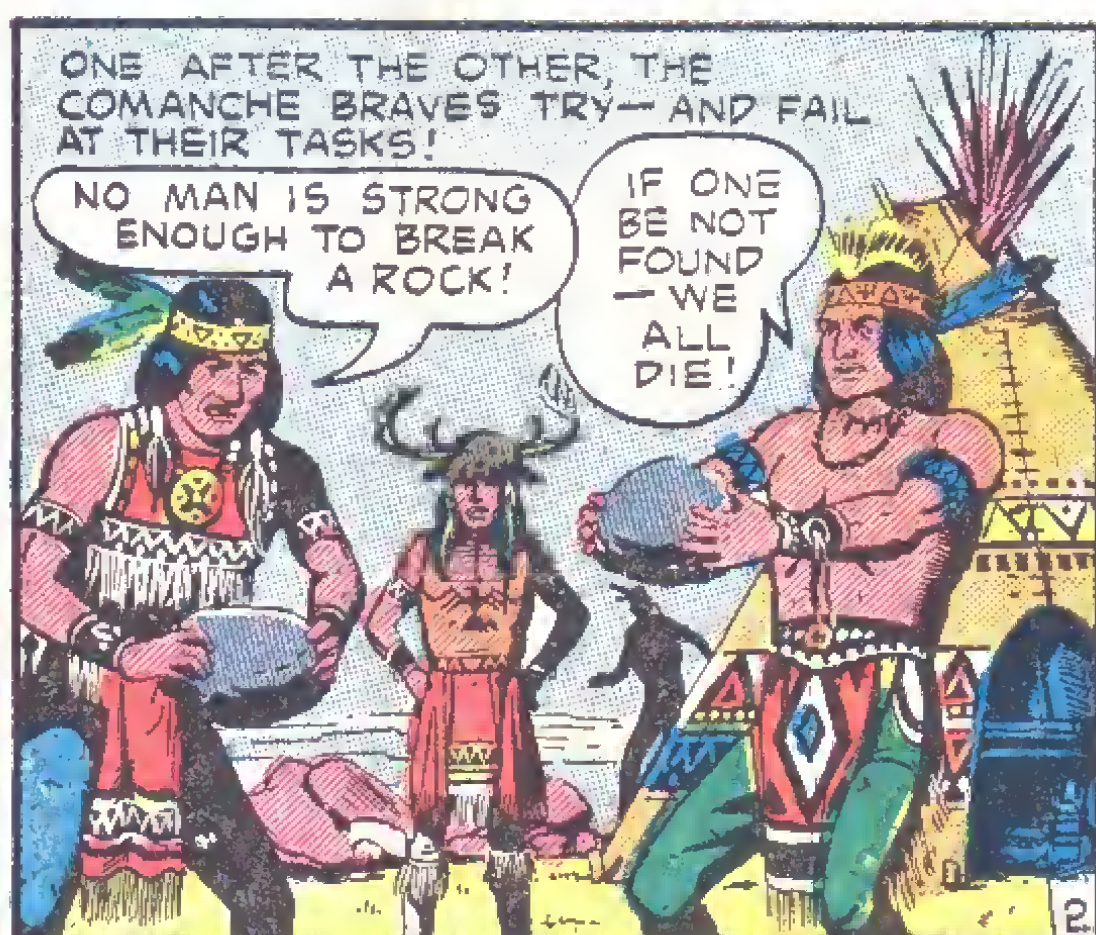
THE MEDICINE MAN MAKES HIS ANNOUNCEMENT, AND THE COMANCHE PEOPLE STARE AT ONE ANOTHER...

WHO CAN DO THE DEEDS OF THE THUNDERER?

HE WAS NO MERE MAN—HE WAS A SPIRIT!



ALL MUST TAKE THE TEST! ALL MUST SEEK TO DO HIS DEEDS! FOR THE PLAGUE WILL SLAY US ALL, IF ONE BE NOT FOUND TO BE ANOTHER THUNDERER!

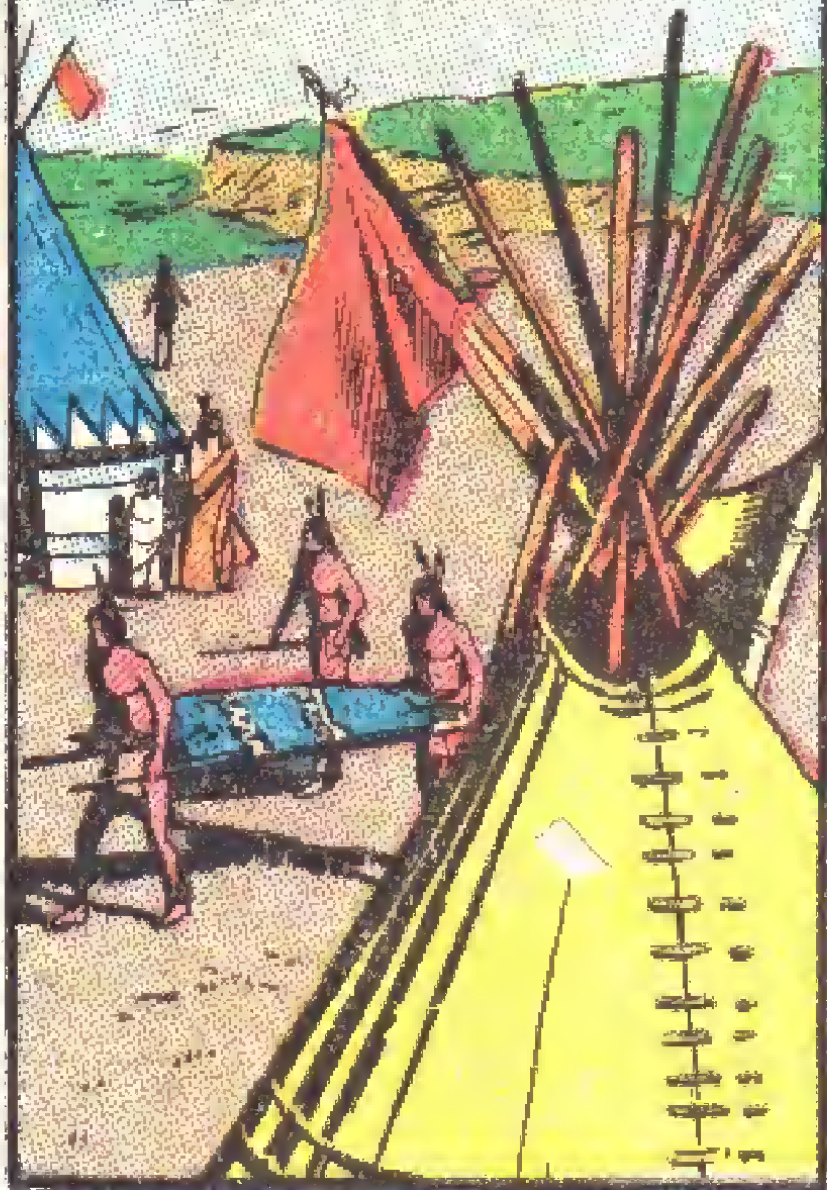


ONE AFTER THE OTHER, THE COMANCHE BRAVES TRY—AND FAIL AT THEIR TASKS!

NO MAN IS STRONG ENOUGH TO BREAK A ROCK!

IF ONE BE NOT FOUND—WE ALL DIE!

THE PLAGUE MOVES WITH THE SPEED OF A STRIKING RATTLER! SOON STRIPS OF RED FLANNEL FLY FROM NEARLY EVERY TEPEE...



NEXT DAY, **STRAIGHT ARROW** RIDES IN FROM A HUNT. HO-AH-DEN-SEE POINTS TO A PILE OF ROCKS...

ALL HAVE TRIED AND FAILED! **YOU** ARE OUR ONLY HOPE!



AS GASPS OF AWE RISE IN COMANCHE THROATS, **STRAIGHT ARROW** LIFTS A ROCK AND CRUMBLES IT WITH HIS FINGERS!



YOU ALONE HAVE DONE THE IMPOSSIBLE! BUT THAT IS ONLY THE BEGINNING! THE THUNDERER COULD SHOOT AN ARROW SO FAST—HE COULD GET THE VERY AIR ON FIRE!



WITH HALF THE VILLAGE TRAILING HIM, **STRAIGHT ARROW** MOVES BEYOND THE PLAGUE-RIDDEN TEPEES. HE LIFTS HIS BOW—

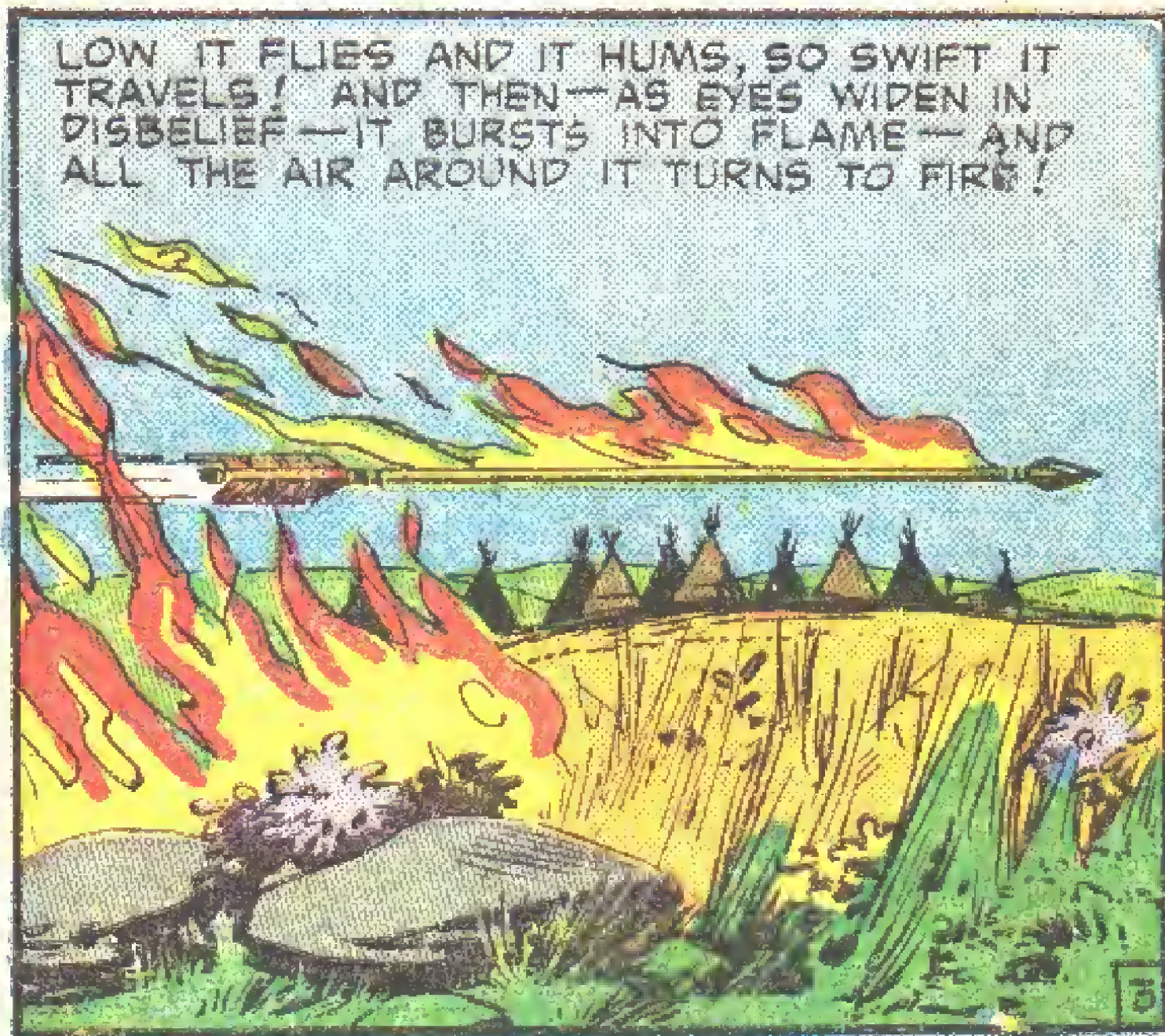


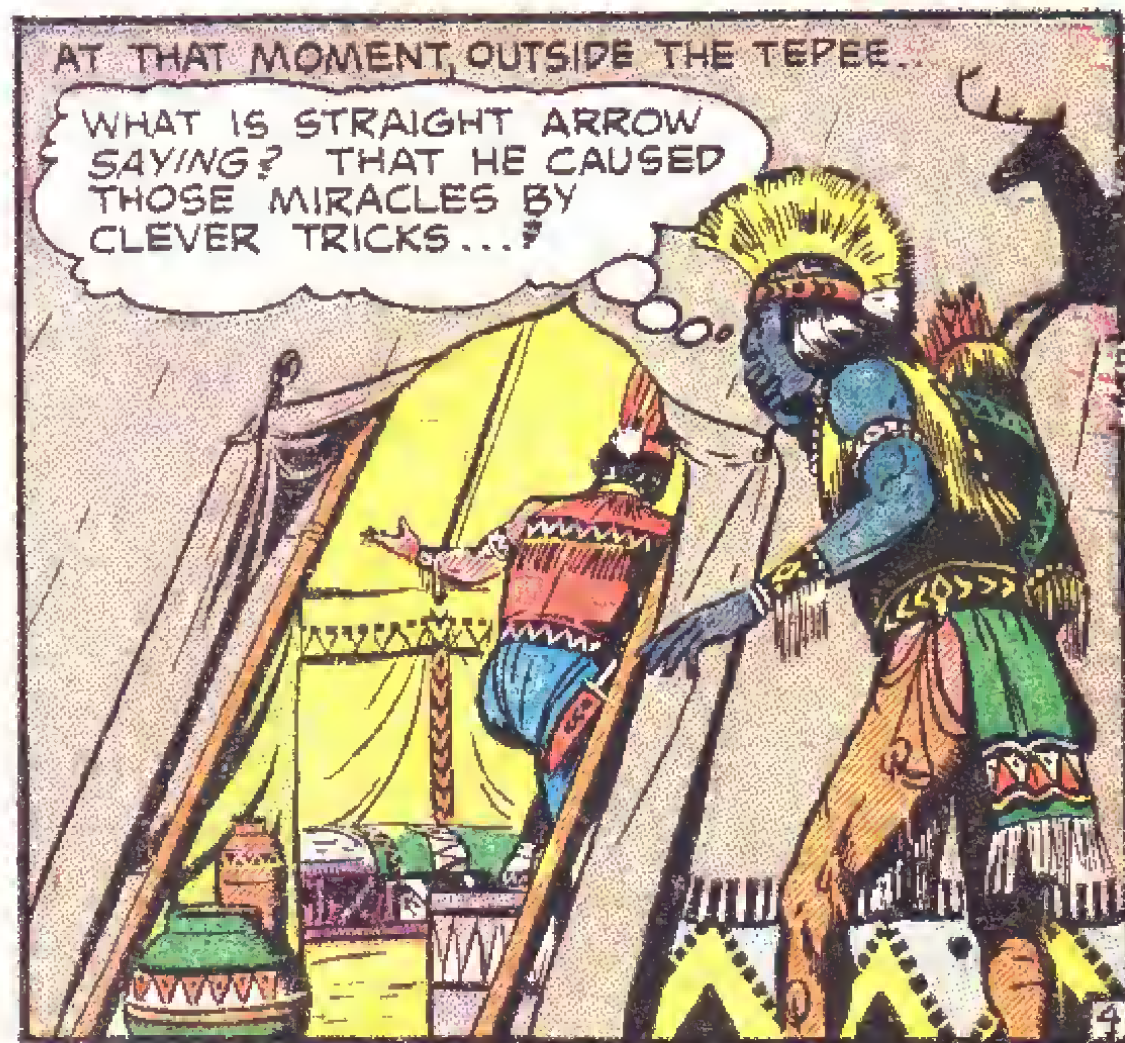
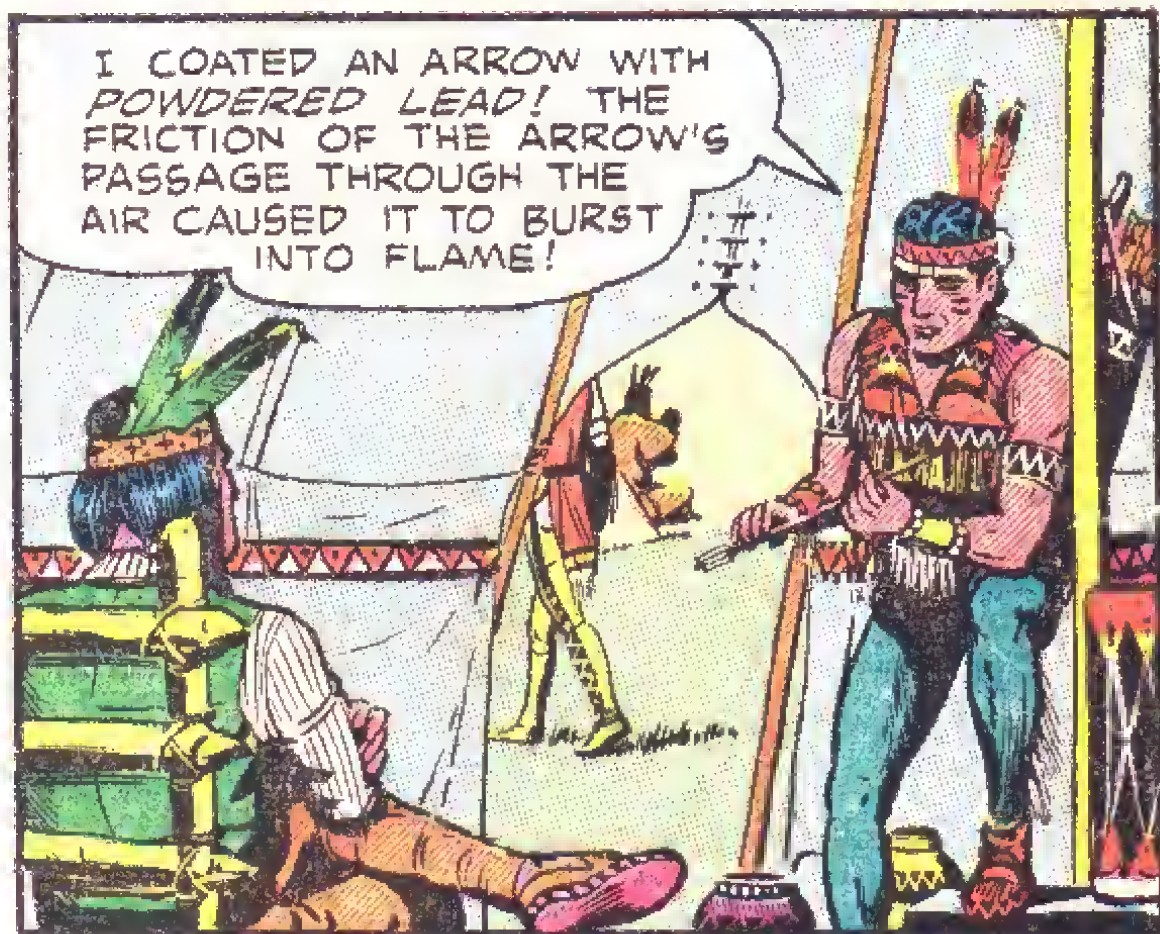
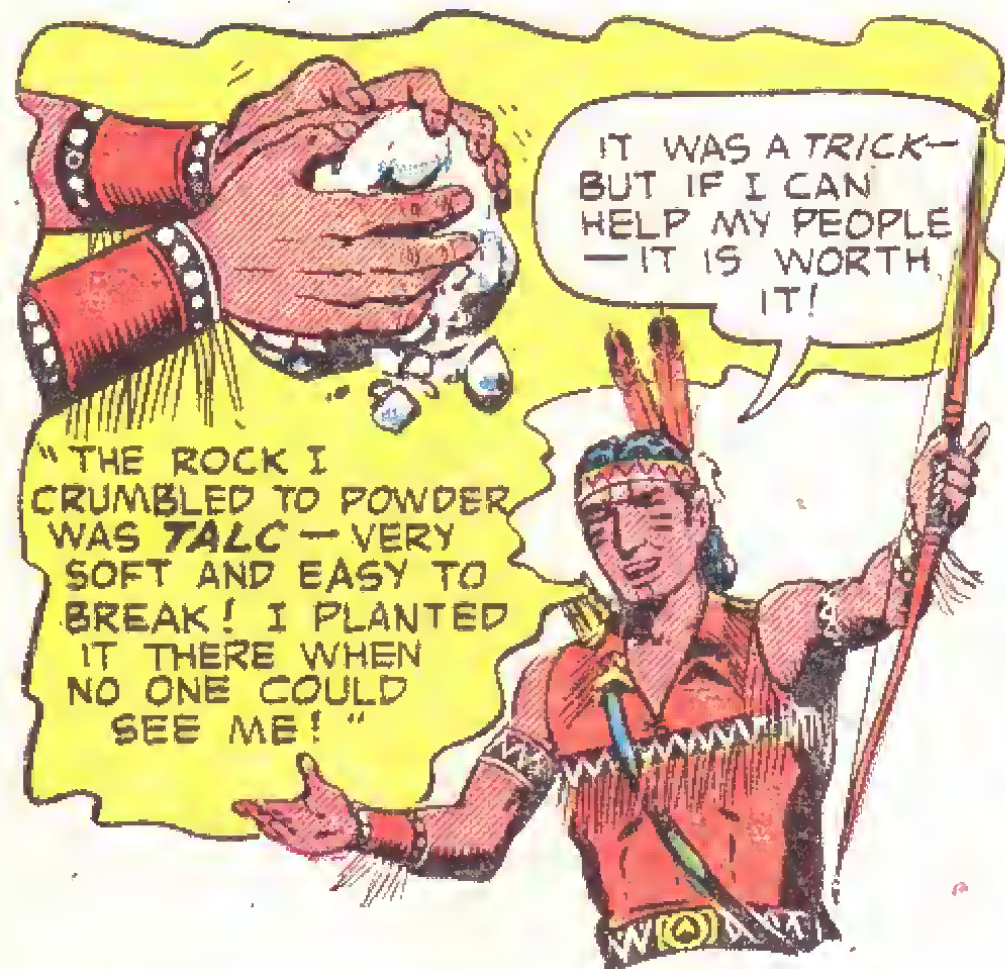
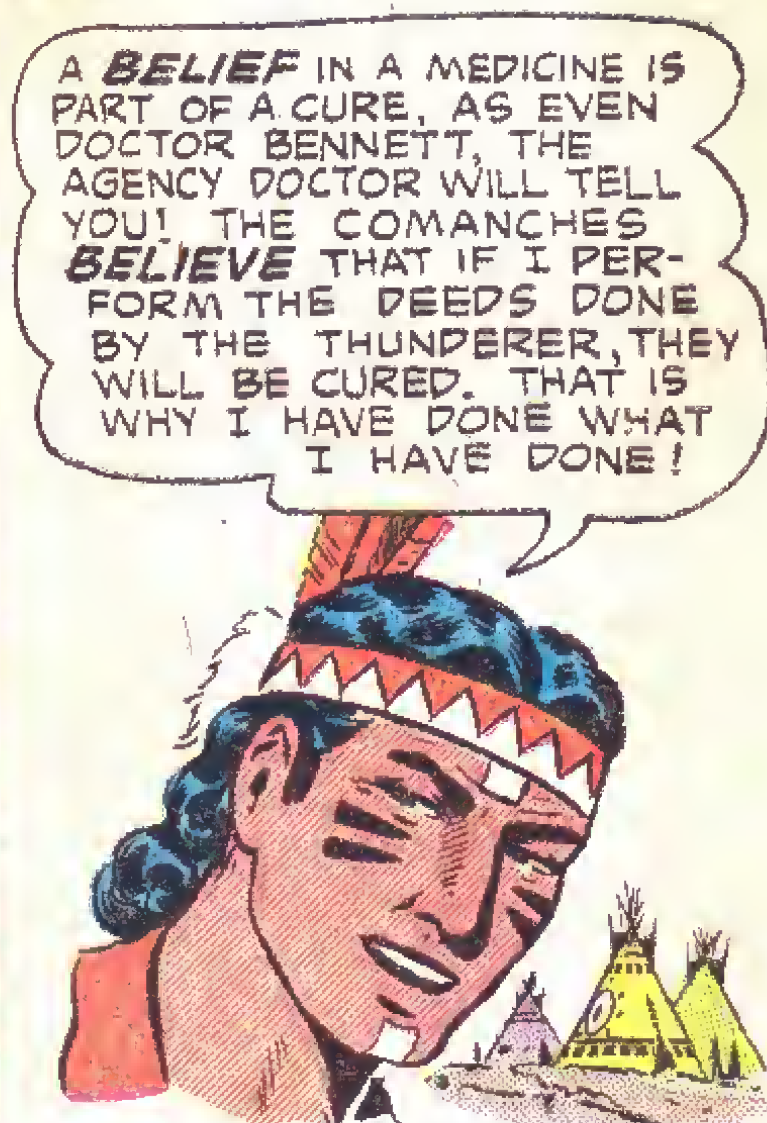
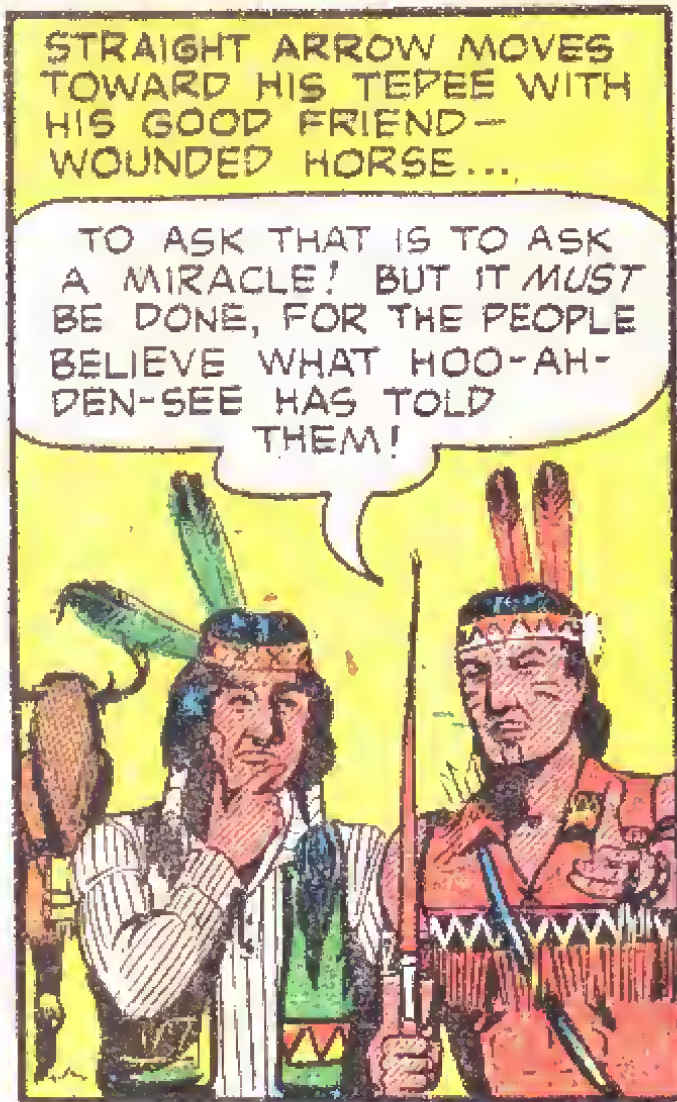
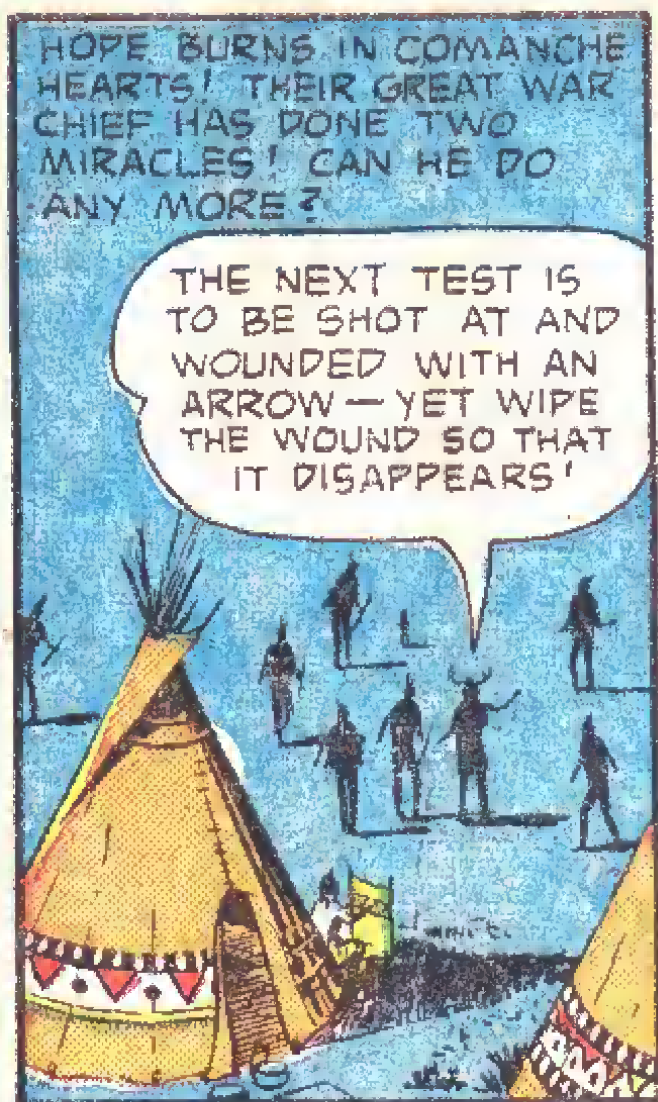
THE BOWSTRING TWANGS—AND THE ARROW LEAPS FORWARD—

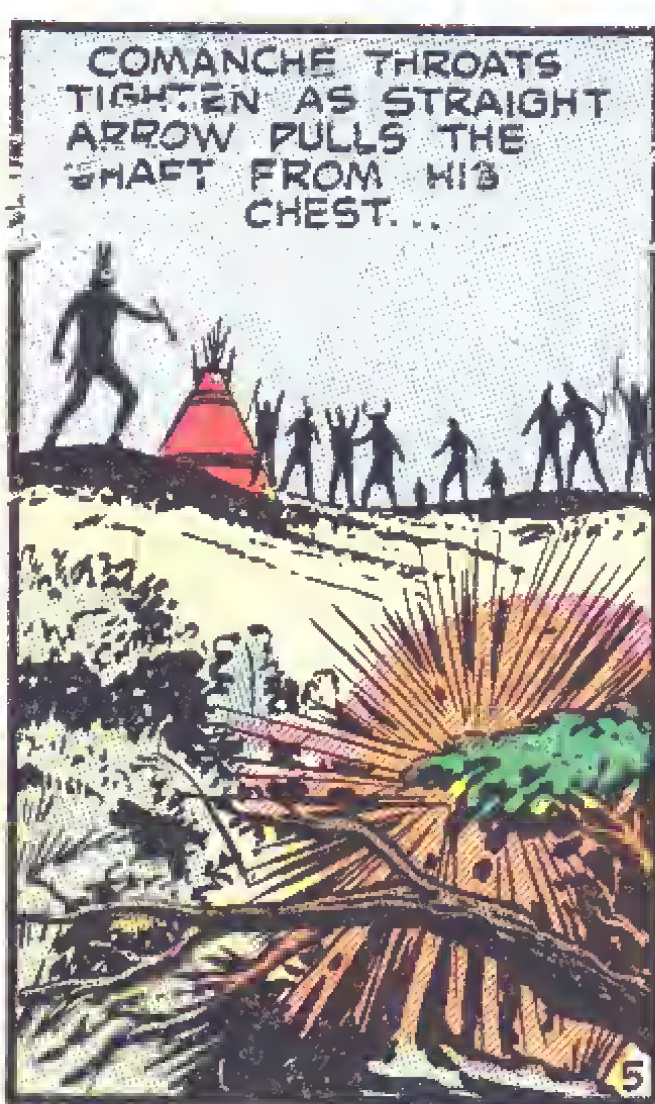
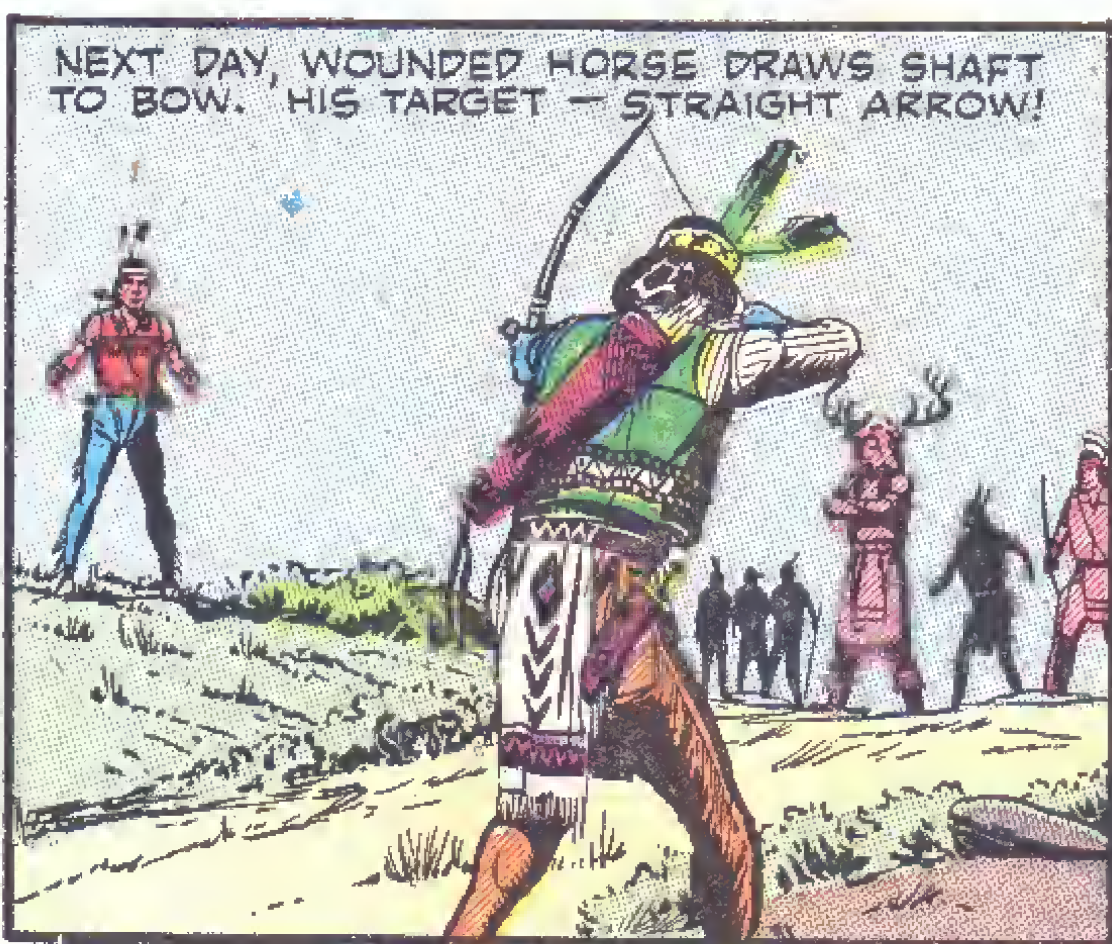
PRAY THAT IT TURNS TO FLAME—FOR IF IT DOES NOT—



LOW IT FLIES AND IT HUMS, SO SWIFT IT TRAVELS! AND THEN—AS EYES WIDEN IN DISBELIEF—IT BURSTS INTO FLAME—AND ALL THE AIR AROUND IT TURNS TO FIRE!







THE ARROW IN HIS HAND, STRAIGHT ARROW BRUSHES THE FLAT OF HIS HAND ACROSS HIS CHEST—AND THE WOUND AND THE BLOOD ARE GONE!



HE SAW THE POISONED NEEDLE I INSERTED! HE FASHIONED ANOTHER SHAFT IN TIME!

WAIT, LOPING BEAR!



I EXAMINED THE ARROW!—AND SAW THE POISONED NEEDLE! THE SHAFT YOU LEFT IN PLACE OF THE TRUE ONE—BORE YOUR MARKINGS! IT WAS A FOOLISH MISTAKE, LOPING BEAR!



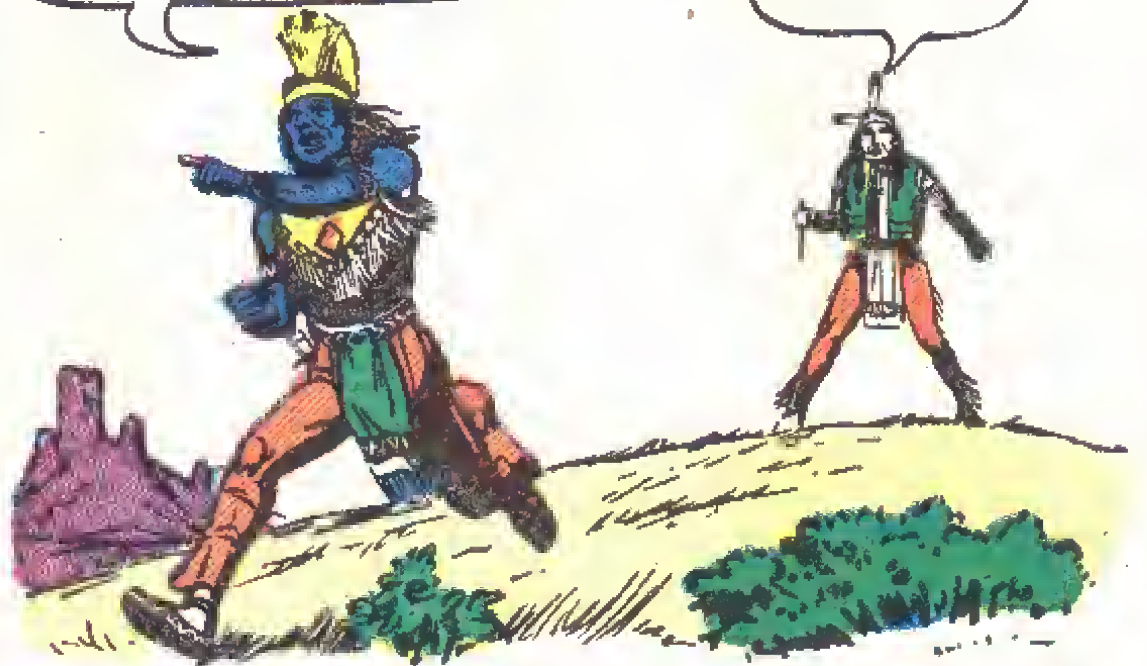
BUT IT WOULD BE EVEN MORE FOOLISH FOR YOU TO REMAIN AMONG GOOD COMANCHES, LOPING BEAR! STRAIGHT ARROW IS MY FRIEND. IT WOULD BE AN HONOR TO RUN A KNIFE THROUGH THE THROAT OF A MAN WHO HATES HIM!

NO! NO! I'LL GO AWAY. B-BUT BEFORE I GO...

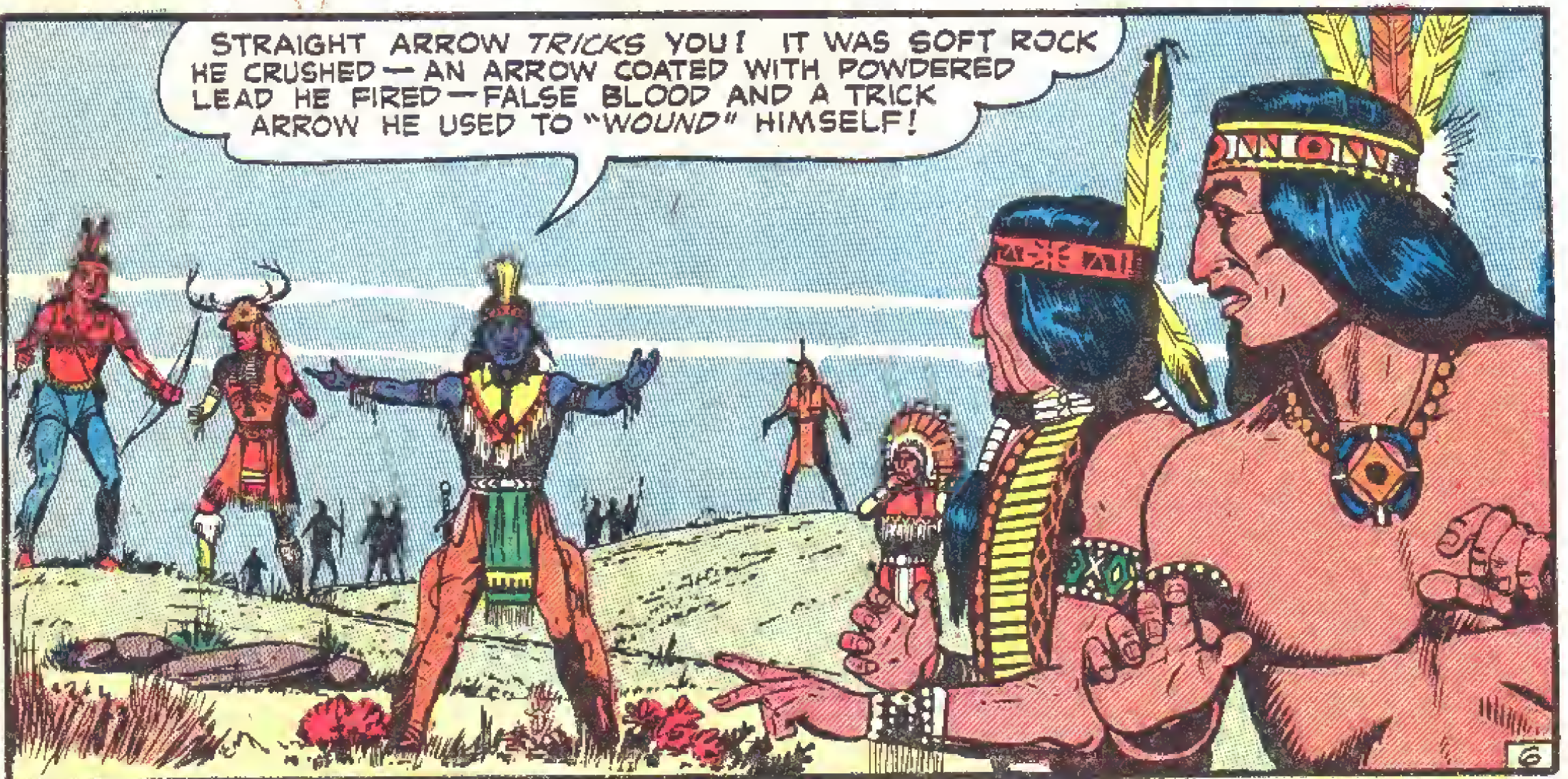


I WILL TELL THE PEOPLE THE **TRUTH** ABOUT THEIR GREAT WAR CHIEF!... **LISTEN TO ME! LISTEN, ALL YOU COMANCHES!**

YOU...!



STRAIGHT ARROW TRICKS YOU! IT WAS SOFT ROCK HE CRUSHED—AN ARROW COATED WITH POWDERED LEAD HE FIRED—FALSE BLOOD AND A TRICK ARROW HE USED TO "WOUND" HIMSELF!



THESE ARE HOT WORDS YOU SPEAK, LOPING BEAR! THE TRIBE KNOWS YOU HATE STRAIGHT ARROW! YOU WILL HAVE A CHANCE TO PROVE WHAT YOU SAY!

HIS NEXT AND LAST FEAT IS TO KILL THE WAKIKI -- THE INVISIBLE BIRD! THE THUNDERER DID IT! THEN HE MUST COOK THE BIRD AND SERVE IT!

NONE CAN SEE THE WAKIKI! ONLY IN LEGENDS OF THE COMANCHE NATION DOES IT EXIST! THIS IS THE BIRD GLAIN BY THE THUNDERER. THIS IS THE BIRD WHICH NO MAN CAN SEE -- THAT STRAIGHT ARROW MUST SLAY AND COOK IN THE CAMP FIRES!

YOU WILL SEE I SPEAK THE TRUTH! HOW CAN ANYONE KILL A BIRD HE CANNOT SEE?

OUT INTO THE HIGH PLAINS RIDES STRAIGHT ARROW WITH THE MEDICINE MAN AND LOPING BEAR...

THE NOONDAY SUN IS HIGH OVERHEAD AS STRAIGHT ARROW HALTS ABRUPTLY AND FIRES AN ARROW HIGH INTO THE AIR...

UP THERE! YOU SEE? A PALE GOLDEN HAZE -- THE WAKIKI!

I SEE NOTHING!

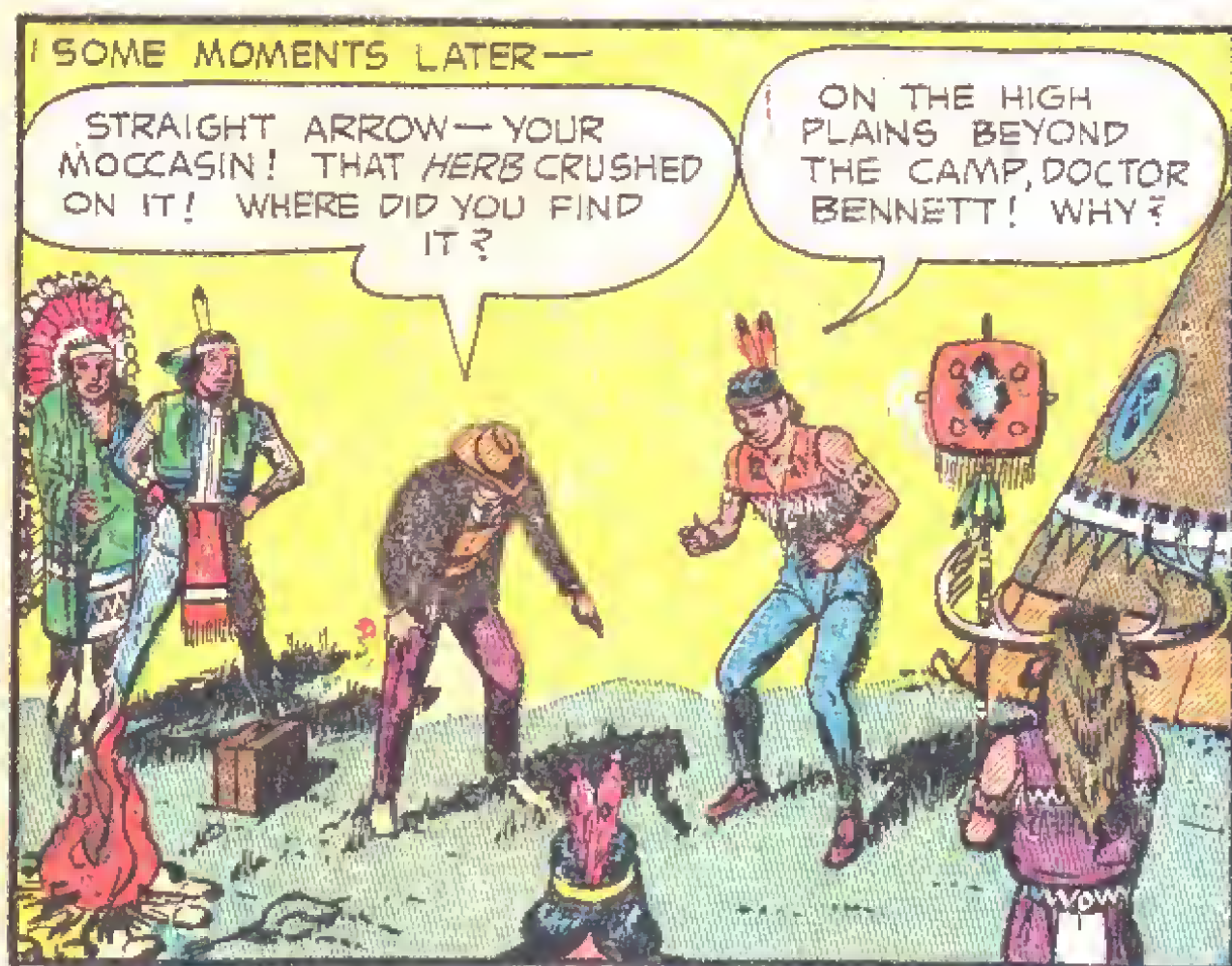
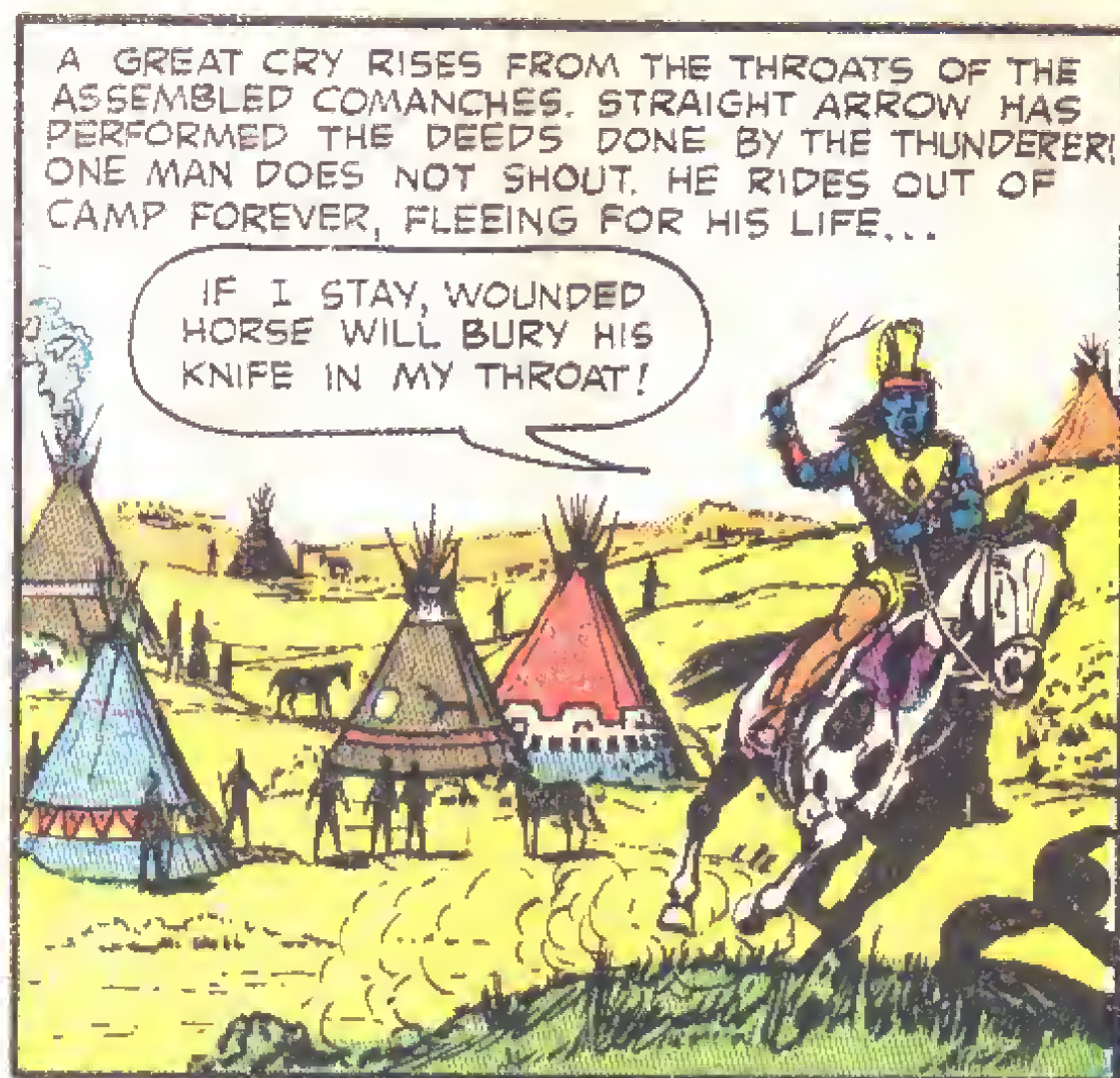
THERE IS NOTHING THERE!

THAT IS BECAUSE THE THUNDERER DID NOT OPEN YOUR EYES! THE WAKIKI IS HERE -- DEAD!

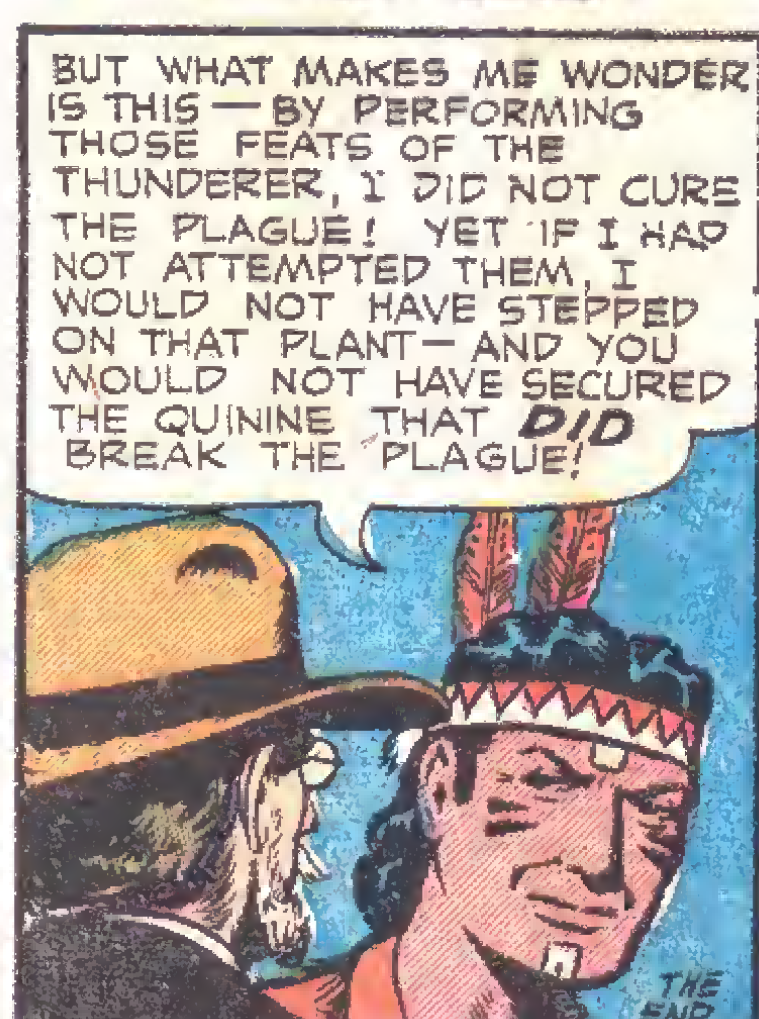
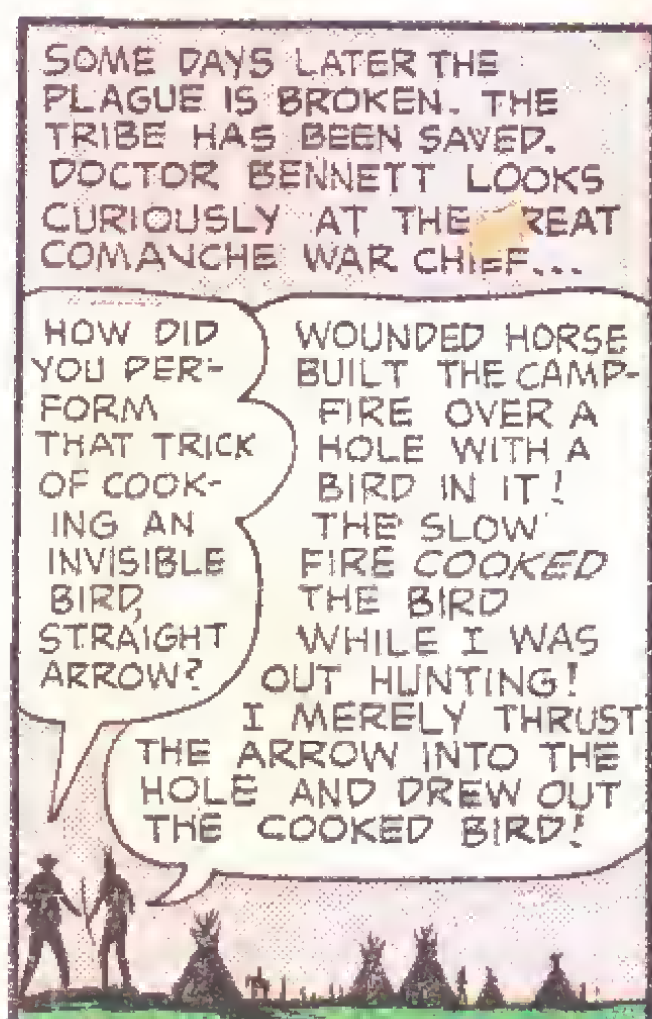
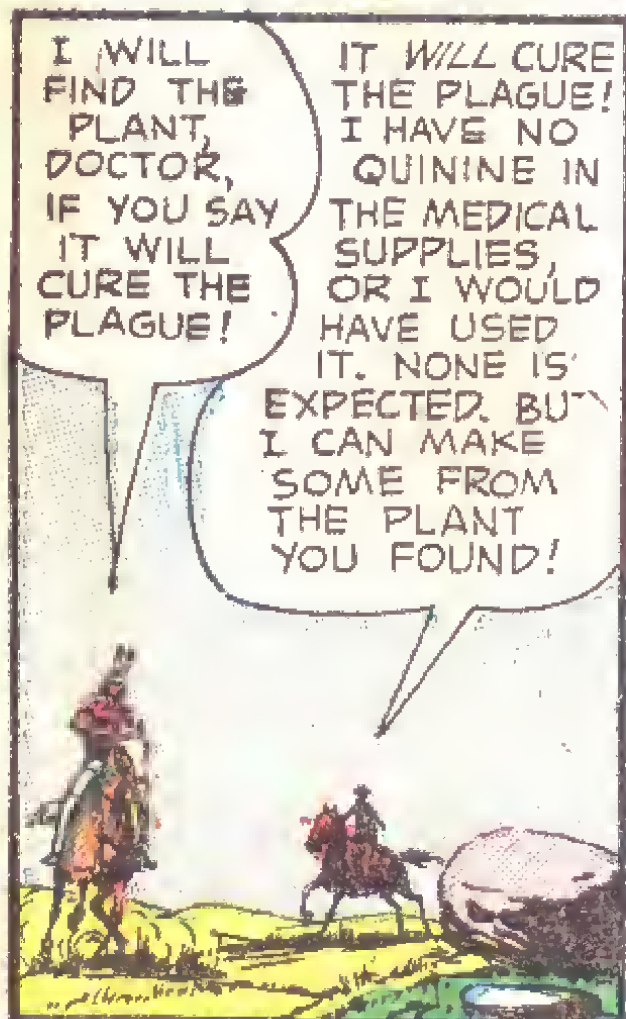
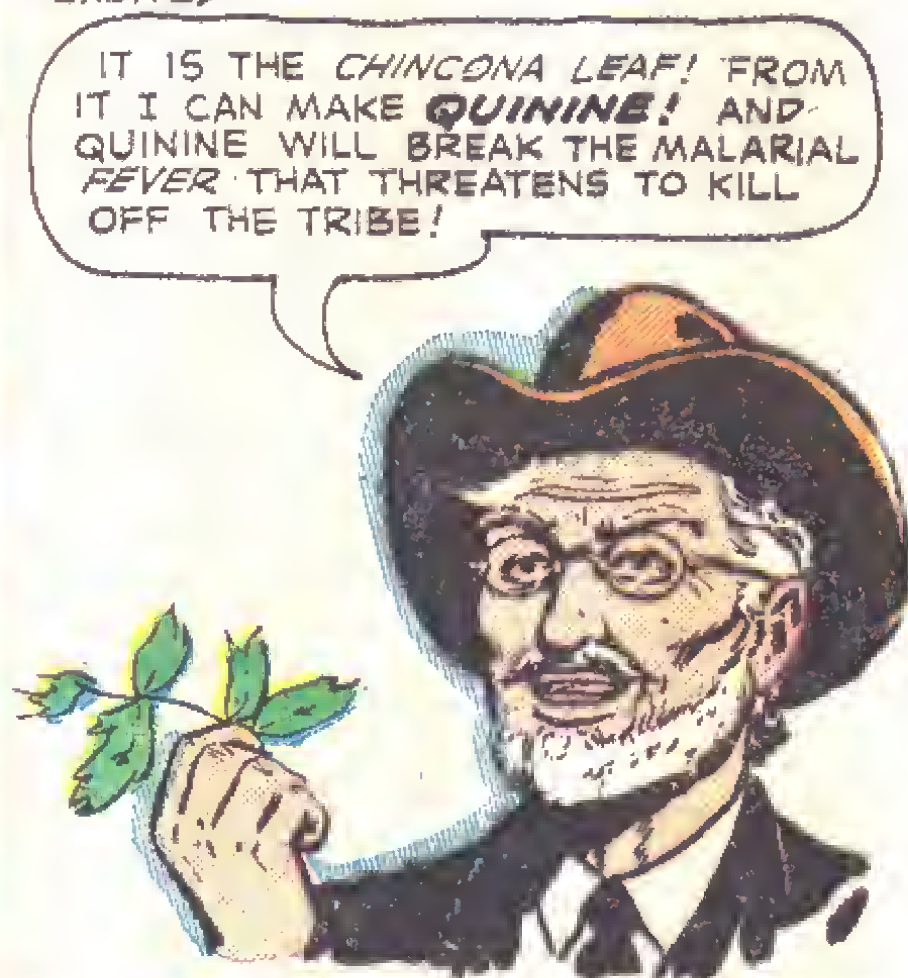
DOUBT AND FEAR SET CHILL FINGERS IN LOPING BEAR'S HEART. IS IT POSSIBLE HE WAS MISTAKEN? CAN STRAIGHT ARROW SPEAK THE TRUTH?

RIDE WITH ME, LOPING BEAR! YOU WILL SEE ME COOK THE WAKIKI AND SERVE IT TO HOO-AH-DEN-SEE...

A TRICK OF SOME SORT! BUT I CAN PROVE NOTHING!



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